# MY YEAR OF THE GREAT WAR

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

GOING TO WAR IN GREECE
THE WAYS OF THE SERVICE
THE VAGABOND
WITH KUROKI IN MANCHURIA
OVER THE PASS
THE LAST SHOT
MY YEAR OF THE GREAT WAR

# MY YEAR OF THE GREAT WAR

BY

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Author of "The Last Shot," "With Kuroki in Manchuria," "The Vagabond," etc.

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# TO THE READER

In "The Last Shot," which appeared only a few months before the Great War began, drawing from my experience in many wars, I attempted to describe the character of a conflict between two great European land-powers, such as France and Germany.

"You were wrong in some ways," a friend writes to me, "but in other ways it is almost as if you had written a play and they were following your script and stage business."

Wrong as to the duration of the struggle and its bitterness; right about the part which artillery would play; right in suggesting the stalemate of intrenchments when vast masses of troops occupied the length of a frontier. Had the Germans not gone through Belgium and attacked on the shorter line of the Franco-German boundary, the parallel of fact with that of prediction would have been more complete. As for the ideal of "The Last Shot," we must await the outcome to see how far it shall be fulfilled by a lasting peace.

Then my friend asks, "How does it make you feel?" Not as a prophet; only as an eager observer, who finds that imagination pales beside reality. If sometimes an incident seemed a page out of my novel, I was reminded how much better I might have done that page from life; and from life I am writing now.

I have seen too much of the war and yet not enough to assume the pose of a military expert; which is easy when seated in a chair at home before maps and news despatches, but becomes fantastic after one has lived

at the front. One waits on more information before he forms conclusions about campaigns. He is certain only that the Marne was a decisive battle for civilisation; that if England had not gone into the war the Germanic Powers would have won in three months.

No words can exaggerate the heroism and sacrifice of the French or the importance of the part which the British have played, which we shall not realise till the war is over. In England no newspapers were suppressed; casualty lists were given out; she gave publicity to dissensions and mistakes which others concealed, in keeping with her ancient birthright of free institutions which work out conclusions through discussion rather than taking them ready-made from any ruler or leader.

Whatever value this book has is the reflection of personal observation and the thoughts which have occurred to me when I have walked around my experiences and measured them and found what was worth while and what was not. Such as they are, they are real.

Most vital of all in sheer expression of military power was the visit to the British Grand Fleet; most humanly appealing, the time spent in Belgium under German rule; most dramatic, the French victory on the Marne; most precious, my long stay at the British front.

A traveller's view I had of Germany in the early period of the war; but I was never with the German army which made Americans particularly welcome for obvious reasons. Between right and wrong one cannot be a neutral. By foregoing the diversion of shaking hands and passing the time of day on the Germanic fronts, I escaped having to be agreeable to hosts war-

ring for a cause and in a manner obnoxious to me. I was among friends, living the life of one army and seeing war in all its aspects from day to day, instead of having tourist glimpses.

Chapters which deal with the British army in France and with the British fleet have been submitted to the censor. In all, possibly one typewritten page fell foul of the blue pencil. Though the censor may delete military secrets, he may not prompt opinions. Whatever notes of praise and of affection which you may read between the lines or in them spring from the mind and heart. Undemonstratively, cheerily as they would go for a walk, with something of old-fashioned chivalry, the British went to death.

Their national weaknesses and strength, revealed under external differences by association, are more akin to ours than we shall realise until we face our own inevitable crisis. Though one's ancestors had been in America for nearly three centuries and had fought the British twice for a good cause he was continually finding how much of custom, of law, of habit, and of instinct he had in common with them; and how Americans who were not of British blood also shared these as an applied inheritance that has been the most formative element in the crucible of the races which has produced the American type.

My grateful acknowledgments are due to the American press associations who considered me worthy to be the accredited American correspondent at the British front, and to *Collier's* and *Everybody's;* and may an author who has not had the opportunity to read proofs request the reader's indulgence.

FREDERICK PALMER.

British Headquarters, France.

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# MY YEAR OF THE GREAT WAR

# I

## WHO STARTED IT?

The ultimate arbitrament — The diplomatist's status — The causes in the aims and ideals of the peoples — Europe's economic relation to the rest of the world — The economic cause — "Biological necessity" — England's position — Her complacency — The "German Wedge" — The German system — Modern efficiency methods — "A machine civil world" — The Kaiser's mission — A German the world over — Germany's plans and ambitions — Her war spirit — Activities in Italy — The Austrian situation — The Slav-Teuton racial hatred — France, a nation with a closed-in culture — The Kaiser's "peace" — The Germanic "isolation."

WHO started it? Who is to blame? The courts decide the point when there is a quarrel between Smith and Jones; and it is the ethics of simple justice that no friend of Smith or Jones should act as judge. When the quarrel is between nations, the neutral world turns to the diplomatic correspondence which preceded the breaking-off of relations; and only one who is a neutral can hope to weigh impartially the evidence on both sides. For war is the highest degree of partisanship. Every one engaged is a special pleader.

I, too, have read the White and Blue and Yellow and Green Papers. Others have analysed them in detail; I shall not attempt it. One learned less from their dignified phraseology than from the human motives that he read between the lines. Each was aiming to make out the best case for its own side; aiming to put the heart of justice into the blows of its arms. Obviously, the diplomatist is an attorney for a client.

Incidentally, the whole training of his profession is to try to prevent war. He does try to prevent it; so does every right-minded man. It is a horror and a scourge, to be avoided as you would avoid leprosy. When it does come, the diplomatist's business is to place all the blame for it with the enemy.

One must go many years back of the dates of the State papers to find the cause of the Great War. He must go into the hearts of the people who are fighting, into their aims and ambitions, which diplomatists make plausible according to international law. More illumining than the pamphlets embracing an exchange of despatches was the remark of a practical German: "Von Bethmann-Hollweg made a slip when he talked of a treaty as a scrap of paper and about hacking his way through. That had a bad effect."

Equally pointed was the remark of a practical Briton: "It was a good thing that the Germans violated the neutrality of Belgium; otherwise, we might not have gone in, which would have been fatal for us. If Germany had crushed France and kept the Channel ports, the next step would have been a war in which we should have had to deal with her single-handed."

I would rather catch the drift of a nation's purpose from the talk of statesmen in the lobby or in the club than from their official pronouncements. Von Bethmann-Hollweg had said in public what was universally accepted in private. He had let the cat out of the bag. England's desire to preserve the neutrality of Belgium was not altogether ethical. If Belgium's coast had been on the Adriatic rather than on the British Channel, her wrongs would not have had the support of British arms.

Great moral causes were at stake in the Great War; but they are inextricably mixed with cool, national self-interest and racial hatreds, which are also dictated by self-interest, though not always by the interests of the human race. One who sees the struggle of Europe as a spectator, with no hatred in his heart except of war itself, finds prejudice and efficiency, folly and merciless logic, running in company. He would return to the simplest principles, human principles, to avoid confusion in his own mind. Not of Europe, he studies Europe; he wonders at Europe.

On a map of the world twice the size of a foolscap page, the little finger's end will cover the area of the struggle. Europe is a very small section of the earth's surface, indeed. Yet at the thought of a great European war, all the other peoples drew their breath aghast. When the catastrophe came, all were affected in their most intimate relations, in their income, and in their intellectual life. Rare was the mortal who did not find himself taking sides in what would have seemed to an astronomer on Mars as a local terrestrial upheaval.

From Europe have gone forth the waves of vigour and enterprise which have had the greatest influence on the rest of the world, in much the same way that they went forth from Rome over the then known world. The war in this respect was like the great Roman civil war. The dominating power of our civilisation was at war with itself. Draw a circle around England, Scandinavia, the Germanic countries, and France, and you have the hub from which the spokes radiate to the immense wheel-rim. It is a region which cannot feed its mouths from its own soil, though

it could amply a little more than a century ago in the Napoleonic struggle. In a sense, then, it is a physical parasite on the rest of the world; a parasite which, however, has given its intellectual energy in [illegible] for food for its body.

This war had for its object the delivery of no people from bondage, except the Belgians after the war had begun; it had no religious purpose such as the Crusades; it was not the uprising of democracy like the French Revolution. Those who charged the machine guns and the wives and mothers who urged them on were unconscious of the real force disguised by their patriotic fervour. Ask a man to die for money and he refuses. Ask him to die in order that he may have more butter on his bread and he refuses. This is putting the cause of war too bluntly. It is insulting to courage and to self-sacrifice, assessing them as something set on a counter for sale. For nations do not know why they fight, as a rule. Processes of evolution and chains of events arouse their patriotic ardour and their martial instinct till the climax comes in blows.

The cause of the European war is economic; and, by the same token, Europe kept the peace for forty years for economic reasons. She was busy skimming the cream of the resources of other countries. Hers was the capital, the skill, the energy, the *morale,* the culture, for exploiting the others. All modern invention originated with her or with the offspring of her races beyond seas. Steamers brought her raw material, which she sent back in manufactures; they took forth, in place of the buccaneers of former days seeking gold, her financiers, engineers, salesmen, and teachers, who returned with tribute or sent back the interest on the capital they had applied to enterprise. She looked

down on the rest of the world with something of the Roman patrician feeling of superiority to outsiders.

But also the medical scientist kept pace with other sciences and with invention. Sanitation and the preservation of life led to an amazing rapidity of increase in population. There were more mouths to feed and more people who must have work and share the tribute. Without the increase of population it is possible that we should not have had war. Biological necessity played its part in bringing on the struggle, along with economic pressure. The richest veins of the mines of other lands, the most accessible wood of the forests, were taken, and a higher rate of living all over Europe increased the demand of the numbers.

Most fortunate of all the European peoples were the British. Most significant in this material progress was the part of Germany. England had a narrow stretch of salt water between her and the other nations. They could fight one another by crossing a land frontier; to fight her, they must cross in ships. She had the advantage of being of Europe and yet separated from Europe. All the seas were the secure pathway for her trade, guaranteed for a century by the victory of Trafalgar. By war she had won her sea power; by war she was the mistress of many colonies. Germany's increasing mercantile marine had to travel from a narrow sea front through the channel called British. Rich was England's heritage beyond her own realisation. Hers the accumulated capital; hers the field of resources under her own flag to exploit.

But she had done more. Through a century's experience she had learned the strength of moderation. What she had won by war she was holding by wisdom. If some one must guard the seas, if some one must

have dominion over brown and yellow races, she was well fitted for the task. Wherever she had dominion, whether Bombay or Hongkong, there was freedom in trade and in development for all men. We who have travelled recognise this.

When the war began, South Africa had no British regular garrisons, but the Boers, a people who had lost their nation in war with her fifteen years before, took up arms under her flag to invade a German colony. India without a parliament, India ruled by English governors, sent her troops to fight in France. In place of sedition, loyalty from a brave and hardy white people of another race and from hundreds of millions of brown men! Such power is not gained by war, but by the policy of fair play; of live and let live. Measurably, she held in trust those distant lands for the other progressive nations; she was the policeman of wide domains. Certainly no neutral, at least no American, envied her the task. Certainly no neutral, for selfish reasons if for no other, would want to risk chaos throughout the world by the transfer of that power to another nation.

England was satiated, as Admiral Mahan said. She had gained all that she cared to hold. It is not too much to say that, of late years, colonies might come begging to her doorstep and be refused. Those who held her wealth were complacent as well as satiated — which was her danger. For complacency goes with satiation. But she, too, was suffering from having skimmed the cream, for want of mines and concessions as rich as those which had filled her coffers, and from the demand of the increased population become used to a higher rate of living. Her vast, accumulated wealth in investments the world over was in relatively

few hands. In no great European country, perhaps, was wealth more unevenly distributed. Her old age pensions and many social reforms of recent years arose from a restlessness, locally intensified but not alone of local origin.

Another flag was appearing too frequently in her channel. A wedge was being forced into her complacency. A competitor who worked twelve hours a day, while complacency preferred eight or ten, met the Englishman at every turn. A navy was growing in the Baltic; taxes pressed heavily on complacency to keep up a navy stronger than the young rival's. Who really was to blame for the clerks' pay being kept down, while the cost of living went up? That cheap-living German clerk! What capitalist was pressing the English capitalist? The German! The newspapers were always hinting at the German danger. Certain interests in England, as in any other country, were glad to find a scapegoat. Why should Germany want colonies when England ruled her colonies so well? Germany — always Germany, whatever way you looked, Germany with her seventy millions, aggressive, enterprising, industrious, organised! The pressure of the wedge kept increasing. Something must break.

Does any one doubt that if Germany had been in England's place she would have struck the rival in the egg? But that is not the way of complacency. Nor is it the way of that wisdom of moderation, that live and let live, which has kept the British Empire intact.

Germany wanted room for her wedge. In Central Europe, with foes on either side, she had to hold two land frontiers before she could start her sea wedge. She was the more readily convinced that England had won all she held by war because modern Germany was

the product of war. By war Prussia won Schleswig-Holstein; by war Germany won Alsace-Lorraine, and welded the Germanic peoples into a whole. It was only natural that the German public should be loyal to the system that had fathered German success.

Thus, England reveres its Wellingtons, Nelsons, Pitts, and maintains the traditions of the regiments which fought for her. Thus, we are loyal to the Constitution of the United States, because it was drafted by the forefathers who made the nation. If it had been drafted in the thirties we should think it more fallible. It is the nature of individuals, of business concerns, of nations, to hold with the methods that laid the foundations of success till some cataclysm shows that they are wrong or antiquated. This reckoning may be sudden loss of his position in a crisis for the individual, bankruptcy for the business concern, war for the nation. One sticks to the doctor who cured him when he was young and perhaps goes to an early grave because that doctor has grown out of date.

The old Kaiser, Bismarck, and von Moltke laid the basis of the German system. It was industry, unity, and obedience to superiors, from bottom to top. Under it, if not because of it, Germany became a mighty national entity. Another Kaiser, who had the merit of making the most of his inheritance, with other generals and leaders, brought modern methods to the service of the successful system. A new, up-to-date doctor succeeded the old, with the inherited authority of the old.

That aristocratic, exclusive German officer, staring at you, elbowing you if you did not give him right of way in the street, seemed to express insufferable caste to the outsider. But he was a part of the system which had won; and he worked longer hours than the officers

of other European armies. Seeming to enjoy enormous privileges, he was really a circumscribed being, subject to all the rigid discipline that he demanded of others, bred and fashioned for war. Wherever I have met foreign military attachés observing other wars, the German was the busiest one, the most persistent and resourceful after information; and he was not acting on his own initiative, but under careful instructions of a staff who knew exactly what it wanted to know. "Germany shall be first!" was his motto; "Germany shall be first!" the motto of all Germans.

In the same way that von Moltke constructed his machine army, the Germany of the young Kaiser set out to construct a machine civil world. He had a public which was ready to be moulded, because plasticity to the master's hand had beaten France. Drill, application, and discipline had done the trick for von Moltke — these and leadership. The new method was economic education plus drill, application, and discipline.

It is not for me to describe the industrial beehive of modern Germany. The world knows it well. The Kaiser, who led, worked as hard as the humblest of his subjects. From the top came the impetus which the leaders passed on. Germany looked for worlds to conquer; England had conquered hers. The energy of increasing population overflowed from the boundaries, pushing that wedge closer home to an England growing more irritably apprehensive.

Wherever the traveller went he found Germans, whether waiters, or capitalists, or salesmen, learning the language of the country where they lived, making place for themselves by their industry. Germany was struggling for room, and the birth rate was increasing

the excess of population. The business of German nationalism was to keep them all in Germany and mould them into so much more power behind the sea wedge. The German teaching — that teaching of a partisan youth which is never complacent — did not contemplate a world composed of human beings, but a world composed of Germans, loyal to the Kaiser, and others who were not. Within that tiny plot on the earth's surface the German system was giving more people a livelihood and more comforts for their resources than anywhere else, unless in Belgium.

Germany and her Kaiser believed that she had a mission and the right to more room. Wherever there was an opportunity she appeared with his aggressive paternalism to get ground for Germanic seed. The experience of her opportunistic fishing in the troubled waters of Manila Bay in '98 is still fresh in the minds of many Americans. She went into China during the Boxer rebellion in the same spirit. She had her foot thrust into every doorway ajar and was pushing with all her organised imperial might, which kept growing.

I never think of modern Germany without calling to mind two Germans who seem to me to illustrate German strength — and weakness. In a compartment on a train from Berlin to Holland some years ago, an Englishman was saying that Germany was a balloon which would burst. He called the Kaiser a vain madman and set his free English tongue on his dislike of Prussian boorishness, aggressiveness, and *verbotens*. I told him that I should never choose to live in Prussia; I preferred England or France; but I thought that England was closing her eyes to Germany's development. The Kaiser seemed to me a very clever man, his people

on the whole loyal to him; while it was wonderful how so great a population had been organised and cared for. We might learn the value of co-ordination from Germany, without adopting militarism or other characteristics which we disliked.

The Englishman thought that I was pro-German. For in Europe one must always be pro or anti something; Francophile or Francophobe, Germanophile or Germanophobe. I noticed the train-guard listening at intervals to our discussion. Perhaps he knew English. Many German train guards do. Few English or French train-guards know any but their own language. This also is suggestive, if you care to take it that way.

When I left the train, the guard, instead of a porter, took my bag to the custom house. Probably he was of a mind to add to his income, I thought. After I was through the customs he put my bag in a compartment of the Dutch train. When I offered him a tip, the manner of his refusal made me feel rather mean. He saluted and clicked his heels together and said: "Thank you, sir, for what you said about my Emperor!" and with a military step marched back to the German train. How he had boiled inwardly as he listened to the Englishman and held his temper, thinking that "the day" was coming!

The second German was first mate of a little German steamer on the Central American coast. The mark of German thoroughness was on him. He spoke English and Spanish well; he was highly efficient, so far as I could tell. After passing through the Straits of Magellan, the steamer went as far as Vancouver in British Columbia. Its traffic was the small kind which the English did not find worth while, but which tireless German capability in details and cheap labour made

profitable. The steamer stopped at every small West, South, and Central American and Mexican port to take on and leave cargo. At any hour of the night anchor was dropped, perhaps in a heavy ground-swell and almost invariably in intense tropical heat. Sometimes a German coffee planter came on board and had a glass of beer with the captain and the mate. For nearly all the rich Guatemala coffee estates had passed into German hands. The Guatemaltecan dictator taxed the native owners bankrupt and the Germans, in collusion with him, bought in the estates.

Life for that mate was a battle with filthy *cargadores* in stifling heat; he snatched his sleep when he might between ports. The steamer was in Hamburg to dock and refit once a year. Then he saw his wife and children for at most a month; sometimes for only a week. In any essay-contest on "Is Life Worth Living?" it seemed to me he ought to win the prize for the negative side.

"Since I have been on this run I have seen California ranches," he said. "If I had come out to California fifteen years ago, when I thought of emigrating to America, by working half as hard as I have worked — and that would be harder than most California ranchers work — I could have had my own plot of ground and my own house and lived at home with my family. But when I spoke of emigrating I was warned against it. Maybe you don't know that the local officials have orders to dissuade intending emigrants from their purpose. They told me that the United States and Canada were lands of graft, injustice, and disorder, where native Americans formed a caste which kept all immigrants at manual labour. I should be robbed and forced to work for the trusts for

a pittance. Instead of an imperial government to protect me, I should be exploited by millionaire kings. Wasn't I a German? Wasn't I loyal to my Kaiser? Would I forfeit my nationality? This appeal decided me. And I am too old, now, to start at ranching."

Had I been one of those wicked millionaire kings of the United States or Canada, I should have set this man up on a ranch, believing that he was not yet too old to make good in a new land if he were given a fair start, knowing that he would pay back the capital with interest; and I have known wicked millionaire kings to be guilty of such lapses as this from their tyranny.

The imperial German system wanted his earning power and energy back of the sea wedge. German steamship companies promoted emigration from Hungary, Russia, and Italy for the fares it brought. The German government, however, took care that the steamship companies carried no German emigrants; and it ruled that no Russian peasant or Polish Jew bound for Hamburg or Bremen on the way to America might stop over *en route* across Germany, lest he stay. Russians and Poles and Jews were not desirable material for the German sea wedge. Let them go into the *pot-au-feu* of the capacious and indiscriminating American melting-pot, which may yet make something of them that will surprise the chauvinists.

Breed more Germans; keep them fed, clothed, employed, organised industrially, educated! Don't relieve the economic pressure by emigration or by lowering the birth rate! Keep up the military spirit! Develop the money spirit! Instilled with loyalty to the Kaiser, with a sense of superiority in industry and training as well as of racial superiority, the German

felt himself the victim of a world injustice. He saw complacent England living on the fat of empire. He saw America with its rich resources and lack of civil organisation and discipline and its waste individual effort.

If the United States only would not play the dog in the manger! If Germany could apply the magic of her system to Mexico or Central America, what tribute that would bring home to Berlin! Consider organised German industrialism working India for all that it was worth! Or Zanzibar! Or the Straits Settlements! Germany had the restless ambition, with an undercurrent of resentment, of the young manager with modern methods who wants to supplant the old manager and his old-fogy methods — an old manager set in his way, but a very kindly, sound old manager, to whose ways the world had grown accustomed.

Taxes for armament, and particularly for that new navy, lay heavily on Germany, too. Driving the wedge by peaceful means became increasingly difficult. It needed the blow of war to split open the way to rich fields. The war spirit lost nothing by Germany's sense of isolation. For this isolation England was to blame; she and the alliances which King Edward had formed around her. England was to blame for everything. Germany could not be to blame for anything. The national rival is always the scapegoat of patriotism. So Germany prepared to strike, as one prepares to build and open a store or to put on a play.

Where forty years ago the Englishman, with his aggressive ways, was the unpopular traveller in Europe, the German had become most disliked. In Italy, with his expanding industry, he ran many hotels. His success and his personal manners combined to

make the sensitive Italian loathe him. Thus, he sowed the seed of popular feeling which broke in a wave that forced Italy into the war.

Germany thought of England as too selfish and cunning in her complacency really to come to the aid of France and Russia. She would stay out; and had she stayed out, Germany would have crushed Russia and then turned on France. But Germany did not know England any better than England knew Germany. The jaundiced mists of chauvinism kept even high leaders from seeing their adversaries clearly.

Austria, too, was feeling economic pressure. Her people, especially the Hungarians, looked toward the southeast for expansion. Her shrewd statesmanship, its instincts inherited from the Hapsburg dynasty, playing race hatred against race hatred and bound, so it looked, to national disruption, welcomed any opportunity which would set the mind of the whole people thinking of some exterior object rather than of internal differences. She annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina with its Slav population at a moment when Russia was not prepared to aid her kindred. Bosnia and Herzegovina are better off for the annexation; they have enjoyed rapid material progress as the result.

Bounded by the Danube and the Turk were the Balkan countries, which ought to be the garden spot of civilisation. Here, poverty aggravated racial hate and racial hate aggravated poverty in a vicious circle. Serbia, longest free of the Turk, adjoining Austria, had no outlet except through other lands. She was a commercial slave of Austria, dependent on Austrian tariffs and Austrian railroads, with Hungarian business men holding the purse-strings of trade. In her swineherds and tillers the desire for some of the good things

of modern life was developing. Strangling, with Austria's hands at her throat, with many clever, resourceful agitators urging her on, she fought in the only way that she knew. To Austria she was the uncouth swineherd who assassinated the Austrian Crown Prince and his consort. This deed was the exterior object which united Austria in a passionate rage. For Austria, more than any other country, could welcome war for the old reason. It let out the emotion of the nation against an enemy instead of against its own rulers.

A deeper-seated cause was the racial hatred of Slav and Teuton. For rulers do not make war these days; they try to keep their thrones secure on the crest of public opinion. They appear to rule and to give, and are ruled and yield. Whoever had travelled in Russia of late years had been conscious of a rising ground-swell in the great mass of Russian feeling. Your simple *moujik* had an idea that his Czar had yielded to the Austrians and the Germans. In short, the German had tweaked the nose of the Slav race with the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Czar had borne the insult because his people were willing.

Slow to think, and not thinking overmuch, the Russian peasant began to see red whenever he thought of a German. As a whole public thinks, eventually its rulers must think. The upper class of Russia was inclined to fan the flames of the people's passions. If the people were venting their emotions against the Teuton they would not be developing further revolutions against the old order of things. The military class was prompt to make use of the national tendency to strengthen military resources. By action and re-

action across the frontiers the strain was increasing. Germany saw Russia with double her own population and was sensitive to the dangers behind Russia's ambitions. Russia stood for everything abhorrent to German order and racial feeling.

And what of France? There is little to say of her when we assign responsibility. Here was a nation with its population practically stationary; a nation with a closed-in culture; a democracy with its racial and national integrity assured by its own peculiar genius. Visions of conquest had passed from the French mind. Her "place in the sun" was her own sun of France. Her trade was that due to skill in handicraft rather than to any tactics of aggression. At every Hague conference France was for all measures that would assure peace; Germany against every one that might interfere with her military ambition; England against any that might limit her action in defending the seas.

The desire for "revenge" for '70 had died out in the younger generation of Frenchmen. Her stationary population, which chauvinists resented, had solved the problem of expansion. From father to son, she could be content with her thrift, her industry, and her arts, and with the joy of living. For, more than any other European nation, she had that gift: the joy of living. Her armies and her alliances were truly for defence. She could not fight Germany and Austria alone. She must have help. If Russia went to war she, too, must go to war. She acted up to her belief when she held back her armies five miles from the frontier till the German struck; when she gave Germany a start in mobilisation — a start which, with England's delay, came near being fatal for her. That

price she paid for peace; that advantage Germany gained by striking first. It is a hard moral for the pacificists, but one which ought to give the French conscience a cleaner taste in after years.

The Kaiser, too, insisted that he was for peace. So he was, according to German logic. He realised his military power as the outside world could not realise it. Had Italy joined her forces to her allies, he might have crushed France and then turned on Russia, as his staff had planned. For striking he could reduce France to a second-rate power, take her colonies, fatten German coffers with an enormous indemnity, and gain Belgium and the Channel ports as the next step in national ambition before crushing England and securing the mastery of the seas. But he held off the blow for many years; that is the logic of his partisanship for peace. The fact that France proved stronger than he thought hardly interfered with his belief in his own moderation, in view of his confidence in his arms before the test came. He was for peace because he did not knock the other man down as soon as he might.

No other race in all Europe liked the Germans; not even the Huns, or the Czechs, or the Croats, and least of all the Italians. The Belgians, too, shared the universal enmity. It was Germany that Belgium feared. Her forts looked toward Germany; she looked toward England and France for protection. In this she was unneutral; but not in the thing that counted — thorough military preparation.

Thus were the Germanic empires isolated in sentiment before the war began. This strengthened their realisation that their one true ally was their power in arms, unaffected by any sentiment except that of beating their enemies. Europe, straining under the taxa-

tion of preparation, long held back by fear of the cataclysm, yet drawn by curiosity as to the nature of its capacity, sent her millions of soldiers to that test in practice of the struggle of modern arms which had been the haunting subject of her speculation.

## II

### "LE BRAVE BELGE!"

The stampede to Europe — Early days in Belgium — Characteristics of the Allies' armies — Rumours — First skirmishes — When would the English come? — *Shipperke* spirit — Pathos of the Belgian defence — A Taube and a Belgian cyclist patrol — Brussels before its fall — A momentous decision.

THE rush from Monterey, in Mexico, when a telegram said that general European war was inevitable; the run and jump aboard the *Lusitania* at New York the night that war was declared by England against Germany; the Atlantic passage on the liner of ineffaceable memory, a suspense broken by fragments of war news by wireless; the arrival in an England before the war was a week old; the journey to Belgium in the hope of reaching the scene of action! — as I write, all seem to have the perspective of history, so final are the processes of war, so swift their execution, and so eager is every one for each day's developments. As one grows older the years seem shorter; but the first year of the Great War is the longest year I have known.

*Le brave Belge!* One must be honest about him. If one lets his heart run away with his judgment he does his mind an injustice. A fellow-countryman who was in London and fresh from home in the eighth month of the war, asked me for my views of the relative efficiency of the different armies engaged.

"Do you mean that I am to speak without regard to personal sympathies?" I asked.

"Certainly," he replied.

When he had my opinion he exclaimed:

"You have mentioned them all except the Belgian army. I thought it was the bravest and best of all."

"Is that what they think at home?" I asked.

"Yes, of course."

"The Atlantic is broad," I suggested.

This man of affairs, an exponent of the efficiency of business, was a sentimentalist when it came to war, as Anglo-Saxons usually are. The side which they favour — that is the efficient side. When I ventured to suggest that the Belgian army, in a professional sense, was hardly to be considered as an army, it was clear that he had ceased to associate my experience with any real knowledge.

In business he was one who saw his rivals, their abilities, the organisation of their concerns, and their resources of competition with a clear eye. He could say of his best personal friend: "I like him, but he has a poor head for affairs." Yet he was the type who, if he had been a trained soldier, would have been a business man of war, who would have wanted a sharp, ready sword in a well-trained hand and to leave nothing to chance in a battle for the right. In Germany, where some of the best brains of the country are given to making war a business, he might have been a soldier who would rise to a position on the staff. In America he was the employer of three thousand men — a general of civil life.

"But look how the Belgians have fought!" he exclaimed. "They stopped the whole German army for two weeks."

The best army was best because it had his sympathy. His view was the popular view in America: the view of the heart. America saw the pigmy fighting the

giant rather than let him pass over Belgian soil. On that day when a gallant young king cried, "To arms!" all his people became gallant to the imagination.

When I think of Belgium's part in the war I always think of the little Belgian dog, the *shipperke,* who lives on the canal boats. He is a home-staying dog, loyal, affectionate, domestic, who never goes out on the tow-path to pick quarrels with other dogs; but let anything on two or four feet try to go on board when his master is away and he will fight with every ounce of strength in him. The King had the *shipperke* spirit. All the Belgians who had the *shipperke* spirit tried to sink their teeth in the calves of the invader.

One's heart was with the Belgians on that eighteenth day of August, 1914, when one set out toward the front in an automobile from a Brussels rejoicing over bulletins of victory, its streets walled with bunting; but there was something brewing in one's mind which was as treason to one's desires. Let Brussels enjoy its flags and its capture of German cavalry patrols while it might!

On the hills back of Louvain we came upon some Belgian troops in their long, cumbersome coats, dark silhouettes against the field, digging shallow trenches in an uncertain sort of way. Whether it was them or the Belgian staff officers hurrying by in their cars, I had the impression of the will and not the way and a parallel of raw militia in uniforms taken from grandfather's trunk facing the trained antagonists of an Austerlitz, or a Waterloo, or a Gettysburg.

*Le brave Belge!* The question on that day was not, Are you brave? but, Do you know how to fight? Also, Would the French and the British arrive in time to help you? Of a thousand rumours about the

positions of the French and the British armies, one was as good as another. All the observer knew was that he was an atom in a motor and all he saw for the defence of Belgium was a regiment of Belgians digging trenches. He need not have been in Belgium before to realise that here were an unwarlike people, living by intensive thrift and caution — a most domesticated civilisation in the most thickly populated workshop in Europe, counting every blade of grass and every kernel of wheat and making its pleasures go a long way at small cost; a hothouse of a land, with the door about to be opened to the withering blast of war.

Out of the Hôtel de Ville at Louvain, as our car halted by the cathedral door, came an elderly French officer, walking with a light, quick step, his cloak thrown back over his shoulders, and hurriedly entered a car; and after him came a tall British officer, walking more slowly, imperturbably, as a man who meant to let nothing disturb him or beat him — both characteristic types of race. This was the break-up of the last military conference held at Louvain, which had now ceased to be Belgian Headquarters.

How little you knew and how much they knew! The sight of them was helpful. One was the representative of a force of millions of Frenchmen; of the army. I had always believed in the French army, and have more reason now than ever before to believe in it. There was no doubt that if a French corps and a German corps were set the task of marching a hundred miles to a strategic position, the French would arrive first and win the day in a pitched battle. But no one knew this better than that German staff whose superiority, as von Moltke said, would always ensure victory. Was the French army ready? Could it

bring fulness of its strength into the first and perhaps the deciding shock of arms? Where was the French army?

The other officer who came out of the Hôtel de Ville was the representative of a little army — a handful of regulars — hard as nails and ready to the last button. Where was the British army? The restaurant keeper where we had luncheon at Louvain — he knew. He whispered his military secret to me. The British army was toward Antwerp, waiting to crush the Germans in the flank should they advance on Brussels. We were "drawing them on!" Most cheerful, most confident, mine host! When I went back to Louvain under German rule his restaurant was in ruins.

We were on our way to as near the front as we would go, with a pass which was written for us by a Belgian reservist in Brussels between sips of beer brought him by a boy scout. It was a unique, a most accommodating, pass; the only one I have received from the Allies' side which would have taken me into the German lines.

The front which we saw was in the square of the little town of Haelen, where some dogs of a dog machine gun battery lay panting in their traces. A Belgian officer in command there I recollect for his passionate repetition of, "Assassins! The barbarians!" which seemed to choke out any other words whenever he spoke of the Germans. His was a fresh, livid hate, born of recent fighting. We could go where we pleased, he said; and the Germans were "out there," not far away. Very tired he was, except for the flash of hate in his eyes; as tired as the dogs of the mitrailleuse battery.

We went outside to see the scene of "the battle," as it was called in the despatches; a field in the first flush of the war, where the headless lances of Belgian and German cavalrymen were still scattered about. The peasants had broken off the lance-heads for the steel, which was something to pay for the grain smouldering in the barn which had been shelled and burned.

A battle! It was a battle because the reporters could get some account of it and the fighting in Alsace was hidden under the cloud of secrecy. A superficial survey was enough to show that it had been only a reconnaissance by the Germans with some infantry and guns as well as cavalry. Their defeat had been an incident to the thrust of a tiny feeling finger of the German octopus for information. The scouting of the German cavalry patrols here and there had the same object. Waiting behind hedges or sweeping around in the rear of a patrol with their own cavalry when the word came by telephone, the Belgians bagged many a German, man and horse, dead and alive.

Brussels and London and New York, too, thrilled over these exploits supplied to eager readers. It was the Uhlan week of the war; for every German cavalryman was an Uhlan, according to popular conception. These Uhlans seemed to have more temerity than sense from the accounts that one read. But if one out of a dozen of these mounted youth, with horses fresh and a trooper's zest in the first flush of war, returned to say that he had ridden to such and such points without finding any signs of British or French forces, he had paid for the loss of the others. The Germans had plenty of cavalry. They used it as the eyes of the army, in co-operation with the aerial eyes of the planes.

A peasant woman came out of the house beside the battlefield with her children around her; a flat-chested, thin woman, prematurely old with toil. *"Les Anglais!"* she cried at sight of us. Seeing that we had some lances in the car, she rushed into her house and brought out half a dozen more. If the English wanted lances they should have them. She knew only a few words of French, not enough to express the question which she made understood by gestures. Her eyes were burning with appeal to us and flashing with hate as she shook her fist toward the Germans.

When were the English coming? All her trust was in the English, the invincible English, to save her country. Probably the average European would have passed her by as an excited peasant woman. But pitiful she was to me, more pitiful than the raging officer and his dog battery, or the infantry awkwardly entrenching back of Louvain, or flag-decked Brussels believing in victory: one of the Belgians with the true *shipperke* spirit. She was shaking her fist at a dam which was about to burst in a flood.

It was strange to an American, who comes from a land where every one learns a single language, English, that she and her ancestors, through centuries of living neighbour in a thickly-populated country to people who speak French and to French civilisation, should never have learned to express themselves in any but their own tongue — singular, almost incredible, tenacity in the age of popular education! She would save the lance heads and garner every grain of wheat; she economised in all but racial animosity. This racial stubbornness of Europe — perhaps it keeps Europe powerful in jealous competition of race with race.

The thought that went home was that she did not want the Germans to come; no Belgian wanted them; and this was the fact decisive in the scales of justice. She said, as the officer had said, that the Germans were "out there." Across the fields one saw nothing on that still August day; no sign of war unless a Taube overhead, the first enemy aeroplane I had seen in war. For the last two days the German patrols had ceased to come. Liége, we knew, had fallen. Looking at the map, we prayed that Namur would hold.

"Out there" beyond the quiet fields that mighty force which was to swing through Belgium in flank was massed and ready to move when the German staff opened the throttle. A mile or so away a patrol of Belgian cyclists stopped us as we turned toward Brussels. They were dust-covered and weary; the voice of their captain was faint with fatigue. For over two weeks he had been on the hunt of Uhlan patrols. Another *shipperke* he, who could not only hate but fight as best he knew how.

"We had an alarm," he said. "Have you heard anything?"

When we told him no, he pedalled on more slowly, and oh, how wearily! to the front. Rather pitiful that, too, when you thought of what was "out there."

One had learned enough to know, without the confidential information that he received, that the Germans could take Brussels if they chose. But the people of Brussels still thronged the streets under the blankets of bunting. If bunting could save Brussels, it was in no danger.

There was a mockery about my dinner that night. The waiter who laid the white cloth on a marble table

was unctuously suggestive as to menu. Luscious grapes and crisp salad, which Belgian gardeners grow with meticulous care, I remember of it. One might linger over his coffee, knowing the truth, and look out at the people who did not know it. When they were not buying more buttons with the allied colours, or more flags, or dropping nickel pieces in Red Cross boxes, they were thronging to the kiosks for the latest edition of the evening papers, which told them nothing.

And one had to make up his mind. Clearly, he had only to keep in his room in his hotel in order to have a great experience. He might see the German troops enter Belgium. His American passport would protect him as a neutral; Minister Brand Whitlock and Secretary of Legation Hugh Gibson would get him out of trouble.

"Stick to the army you are with!" an eminent American had told me.

"Yes, but I prefer to choose my army," I had replied.

The army I chose was not about to enter Brussels. It was on the side of the *shipperke* dog mitrailleuse battery which I had seen in the streets of Haelen, and the peasant woman who shook her fist at the invader, and all who had the *shipperke* spirit.

My empty appointment as the representative of the American press with the British army was, at least, taken seriously by the policeman at the War Office in London when I returned from trips to France. The day came when it was good for British trenches and gun positions; when it was worth all the waiting, if one wished to see the drama of modern war intimately.

## III

### MONS AND PARIS

The English base — Stories of the wounded — The cataclysm a reality — London after Mons — The call to Englishmen — The "Fog of war" — From Dieppe to Paris — The red trousers of the French — Empty Paris — Can the German machine be held? — "The French have not had their battle yet!"

BACK from Belgium to England; then across the Channel again to Boulogne, where I saw the last of the French garrison march away, their red trousers a throbbing target along the road. From Boulogne the British had advanced into Belgium. Now their base was moved on to Havre. Boulogne, which two weeks before had been cheering the advent of "Tommee Atkeens" singing "Why should we be downhearted?" was ominously lifeless. It was a town without soldiers, a town of brick and mortar and pavements whose very defencelessness was its security should the Germans come.

The only British there were a few stray wounded officers and men who had found their way back from Mons. They had no idea where the British army was. All they realised were sleepless nights, the shock of combat, overpowering artillery fire, and resisting the onslaught of outnumbering masses.

An officer of Lancers, who had ridden through the German cavalry with his squadron, dwelt on the glory of that moment. What did his wound matter? It had come with the burst of a shell in a village street which killed his horse after the charge. He had hob-

bled away, reached a railroad train, and got on board. That was all he knew.

A Scotch private had been lying with his battalion in a trench when a German aeroplane was sighted. It had hardly passed by when showers of shrapnel descended and the Germans, in that grey-green so hard to see, were coming on as thick as locusts. Then the orders came to fall back, and he was hit as his battalion made another stand. He had crawled a mile across the fields in the night with a bullet in his arm. A medical corps officer told him to find any transportation he could; and he, too, was able to get aboard a train. That was all he knew.

These wounded had been tossed aside into eddies by the maelstrom of action. They were interesting because they were the first British wounded that I had seen; because the war was young.

Back to London again to catch the mail with an article. One was to "commute" to the war from London as home. It was a base whence one sallied forth to get peeps through the curtain of military secrecy at the mighty spectacle. One soaked in England at intervals and the war at intervals. Whenever one stepped on the pier at Folkestone it was with a breath of relief, born of a sense of freedom long associated with fields and hedges on the other side of the chalk cliffs which seemed to make the sequestering barrier of the sea complete.

Those days of late August and early September, 1914, were gripping days to the memory. Eager armies were pressing forward to a cataclysm no longer of dread imagination but of reality. That ever deepening and spreading stain from Switzerland to the North Sea was as yet only a splash of fresh blood.

One still wondered if one might not wake up in the morning and find the war a nightmare. Pictures that grow clearer with time, which the personal memory chooses for its own, dissociate themselves from a background of detail.

They were very quiet, this pair that sat at the next table in the dining-room of a London hotel. I never spoke to them, but only stole discreet glances as we all will in irresistible temptation at any newly-wedded couple. Neither was of the worldly type. One knew that to this young girl London was strange; one knew the type of country home which had given her that simple charm which cities cannot breed; one knew, too, that this young officer, her husband, waited for word to go to the front.

Unconsciously she would play with her wedding-ring. She stole covert glances at it and at him, of the kind that bring a catch in the throat, when he was not looking at her — which he was most of the time, for reasons which were good and sufficient to others than himself. Apprehended in "wool-gathering," she mustered a smile which was so exclusively for him that the neighbour felt that he ought to be forgiven his peeps from the tail of his eye at it because it was so precious.

They would attempt little flights of talk about everything except the war. He was most solicitous that she should have something which she liked to eat, while she was equally solicitous about him. Wasn't he going "out there"? And out there he would have to live on army fare. It was all appealing to the old traveller. And then the next morning — she was alone, after she had given him that precious smile in parting. The incident was one of the thousands be-

fore the war had become an institution, death a matter of routine, and it was a commonplace for young wives to see young husbands away to the front with a smile.

One such incident does for all, whether the war is young or old. There is nothing else to tell, even when you know wife and husband. I was rather glad that I did not know this pair. Then I should be looking at the casualty list in the newspaper each morning and I might not enjoy my faith that he will return alive. These two seemed to me the best of England. I used to think of them when gossip sought the latest turn of intrigue under the mantle of censorship, when Parliament poured out its oral floods and the newspapers their volumes of words. The man went off to fight; the woman returned to her country home. It was the hour of war, not of talk.

On that Sunday in London when the truth about Mons appeared stark to all England, another young man happened to buy a special edition at a street corner at the same time as myself. By all criteria, the world and his tailor had treated him well and he deserved well of the world. We spoke together about the news. Already the new democracy which the war had developed was in evidence. Everybody had common thoughts and a common thing at stake, with values reckoned in lives, and this makes for equality.

"It's clear that we have had a bad knock. Why deny it?" he said. Then he added quietly, after a pause: "This is a personal call for me. I'm going to enlist."

England's answer to that "bad knock" was out of her experience. She had never won at first, but she had always won in the end; she had won the last bat-

tle. The next day's news was worse and the next day's still worse. The Germans seemed to be approaching Paris by forced marches. Paris might fall — no matter! Though the French army were shattered, one heard Englishmen say that the British would create an army to wrest victory from defeat. The spirit of this was fine, but one realised the enormity of the task; should the mighty German machine crush the French machine, the Allies had lost. To say so then was heresy, when the world was inclined to think poorly of the French army and saw Russian numbers as irresistible.

The personal call was to Paris before the fate of Paris was to be decided. My first crossing of the Channel had been to Ostend; the second, farther south to Boulogne; the third was still farther south, to Dieppe. Where next? To Havre! Events were moving with the speed which had been foreseen with myriads of soldiers ready to be thrown into battle by the quick march of the railroad trains.

Every event was hidden under the "fog of war," then a current expression — meagre official bulletins which read like hope in their brief lines, while the imagination might read as it chose between the lines. The marvel was that any but troop trains should run. All night in that third-class coach from Dieppe to Paris! Tired and preoccupied passengers; every one's heart heavy; every one's soul wrenched; every one prepared for the worst! You cared for no other man's views; the one thing you wanted was no bad news. France had known that when the war came it would be to the death. From the first no Frenchman could have had any illusions. England had not realised yet that her fate was with the soldiers of

France, or France that her fate and all the world's was with the British fleet.

An Italian in our compartment would talk, however, and he would keep the topic down to red trousers, and to the red trousers of a French Territorial opposite with an index finger when his gesticulatory knowledge of the French language, which was excellent, came to the rescue of his verbal knowledge, which was poor. The Frenchman agreed that red trousers were a mistake, but pointed to the blue covering which he had for his cap — which made it all right. The Italian insisted on keeping to the trousers. He talked red trousers till the Frenchman got out at his station and then turned to me to confirm his views on this fatal strategic and tactical error of the French. After all, he was more pertinent than most of the military experts trying to write on the basis of the military bulletins. It was droll to listen to this sartorial discourse, when at least two hundred thousand men lay dead and wounded from that day's fight on the soil of France. Red trousers were responsible for the death of a lot of them.

Dawn, early September dawn, on dew-moist fields, where the harvests lay unfinished as the workers, hastening to the call of war, had left the work. Across Paris, which seemed as silent as the fields, to a hotel with empty rooms! Five hundred empty rooms, with a clock ticking busily in every room! War or no war, that old man who wound the clocks was making his rounds softly through the halls from door to door. He was a good soldier, who had heeded Joffre's request that every one should go on with his day's work.

"They're done!" said an American in the foyer. "The French could not stand up against the Germans

— anybody could see that! It's too bad, but the French are licked. The Germans will be here to-morrow or the next day."

I could not and would not believe it. Such a disaster was against all one's belief in the French army and in the real character of the French people. It meant that autocracy was making sport of democracy; it meant disaster to all one's precepts; a personal disaster.

"Look at that interior line which the French now hold. Think of the power of the defensive with modern arms. No! The French have not had their battle yet!" I said.

And the British Expeditionary Force was still intact; still an army, with lots of fight left in it.

# IV

## PARIS WAITS

The Paris of the boulevards a dead city — How Marianne goes to war — The Germans are coming! — Silence and darkness — Moonlight on the Arc de Triomphe — Trust in Joffre and in the army — Turn of the tide — Joffre's *communiqués* more definite — Positions regained — The French in pursuit — Paris breathes again — A Sunday of relief — Religious rejoicing at Notre Dame — Groups in the cafés — The American Embassy "mobilised for war"—"In spite of '70, France still lived."

It was then that people were speaking of Paris as a dead city — a Paris without theatres, without young men, without omnibuses, with the shutters of its shops down and its cafés and restaurants in gloomy emptiness.

The Paris the host of the idler and the traveller, the Paris of the boulevards and the night life provided for the tourist, the Paris that sparkled and smiled in entertainment, the Paris exploited to the average American through Sunday supplements and the reminiscences of smoking-rooms of transatlantic liners, was dead. Those who knew no other Paris and conjectured no other Paris departed as from the tomb of the pleasures which had been the passing extravaganza of relief from dull lives elsewhere. The Parisienne of that Paris spent a thousand francs to get her pet dog safely away to Marseilles. Politicians of a craven type, who are the curse of all democracies, had gone to keep her company, leaving Paris cleaner than ever she was after the streets had had their morn-

ing bath on a spring day when the horse chestnuts were in bloom and Madame was arranging her early editions on the table of her kiosk — a spiritually clean Paris.

Monsieur, would you have America judged by the White Way? What has the White Way to do with the New York of Seventy-second Street or Harlem? It serves the same purpose as the boulevards of furnishing scandalous little paragraphs for foreign newspapers. Foreigners visit it and think that they understand how Americans live in Stockbridge, Mass., or Springfield, Ill. Empty its hotels and nobody but sightseers and people interested in the White Way would know the difference.

The other Paris, making ready to stand siege, with the Government gone to Bordeaux with all the gold of the Bank of France, with the enemy's guns audible in the suburbs and old men cutting down trees and tearing up paving-stones to barricade the streets — never had that Paris been more alive. It was after the death of the old and the birth of the new Paris that an elderly man, seeing a group of women at tea in one of the few fashionable refreshment places which were open, stopped and said:

"Can you find nothing better than that to do, ladies, in a time like this?"

And the Latin temperament gave the world a surprise. Those who judged France by her playful Paris thought that if a Frenchman gesticulated so emotionally in the course of every-day existence, he would get overwhelmingly excited in a great emergency. One evening, after the repulse of the Germans on the Marne, I saw two French reserves dining in a famous restaurant where, at this time of the year, four out

of five diners ordinarily would be foreigners surveying one another in a study of Parisian life. They were big, rosy-cheeked men, country born and bred, belonging to the new France of sports, of action, of temperate habits, and they were joking about dining there just as two sturdy Westerners might about dining in a deserted Broadway. The foreigners and *demi-mondaines* were noticeably absent; a pair of Frenchmen were in the place of the absentees; and after their dinner they smoked their black briar-root pipes in that fashionable restaurant.

Among the picture post-cards then on sale was one of Marianne, who is France, bound for the front in an aeroplane with a crowing French cock sitting on the brace above her. Marianne looked as happy as if she were going to the races; the cock as triumphant as if he had a spur through the German eagle's throat. However, there was little sale for picture post-cards or other trifles, while Paris waited for the siege. They did not help to win victories. News and not *jeux d'esprit,* victory and not wit, was wanted.

For Marianne went to war with her liberty cap drawn tight over her brow, a beat in her temples, and her heart in her throat; and the cock had his head down and pointed at the enemy. She was relieved in a way, as all Europe was, that the thing had come; at last an end of the straining of competitive taxation and preparation; at last the test. She had no channel, as England had, between her and the foe. Defeat meant the heel of the enemy on her soil, German sentries in her streets, submission. Long and hard she had trained; while the outside world, thinking of the Paris of the boulevards, thought that she could

not resist the Kaiser's legions. She was effeminate, effete. She was all right to run cafés and make artificial flowers, but she lacked beef. All the prestige was with her enemy. In '70 all the prestige had been with her. For there is no prestige like military prestige. It is all with those who won the last war.

"But if we must succumb, let it be now," said the French.

On, on — the German corps were coming like some machine-controlled avalanche of armed men. Every report brought them a little nearer Paris. Ah, monsieur, they had numbers, those Germans! Every German mother has many sons; a French mother only one or two.

How could one believe those official *communiqués* which kept saying that the position of the French armies was favourable and then admitted that von Kluck had advanced another twenty miles? The heart of Paris stopped beating. Paris held its breath. Perhaps the reason there was no panic was that Parisians had been prepared for the worst.

What silence! The old men and women in the streets moved as under a spell, which was the sense of their own helplessness. But few people were abroad, and those going on errands apparently. The absence of traffic and pedestrians heightened the sepulchral appearance to superficial observation. At the windows of flats, inside the little shops, and on by-streets, you saw waiting faces, every one with the weight of national grief become personal. Was Paris alive? Yes, if Paris is human and not bricks and stone. Every Parisian was living a century in a week. So, too, was one who loved France. In the

prospect of its loss he realised the value of all that France stands for, her genius, her democracy, her spirit.

One recalled how German officers had said that the next war would be the end of France. An indemnity which would crush out her power of recovery would be imposed on her. Her northern ports would be taken. France, the most homogeneous of nations, would be divided into separate nationalities — even this the Germans had planned. Those who read their Shakespeare in the language they learned in childhood had no doubt of England's coming out of the war secure; but if we thought which foreign civilisation brought us the most in our lives, it was that of France.

What would the world be without French civilisation? To think of France dead was to think of cells in your own brain that had gone lifeless; of something irreparably extinguished to every man to whom civilisation means more than material power of destruction. The sense of what might be lost appealed to you at every turn in scenes once merely characteristic of a whole, each with an appeal of its own now; in the types of people who, by their conduct in this hour of trial, showed that Spartan hearts might beat in Paris — the Spartan hearts of the mass of every-day, work-a-day Parisians.

Those waiting at home calmly with their thoughts, in a France of apprehension, knew that their fate was out of their hands in the hands of their youth. The tide of battle wavering from Meaux to Verdun might engulf them; it might recede; but Paris would resist to the last. That was something. She would resist in a manner worthy of Paris; and one could live on

very little food. Their fathers had. Every day that Paris held out would be a day lost to the Germans and a day gained for Joffre and Sir John French to bring up reserves.

The street lamps should not reveal to Zeppelins or Taubes the location of precious monuments. You might walk the length of the Champs Élysées without meeting a vehicle or more than two or three pedestrians. The avenue was all your own; you might appreciate it as an avenue for itself; and every building and even the skyline of the streets you might appreciate, free of any association except the thought of the results of man's planning and building. Silent, deserted Paris by moonlight, without street lamps — few had ever seen that. Millionaire tourists with retinues of servants following them in automobiles may never know this effect; nor the Parisienne who paid a thousand francs to send her pet dog to Marseilles.

The moonlight threw the Arc de Triomphe in exaggerated spectral relief, sprinkled the leaves of the long rows of trees, glistened on the upsweep of the broad pavements, gleamed on the Seine. Paris was majestic, as scornful of Prussian eagles as the Parthenon of Roman eagles. A column of soldiery marching in triumph under the Arch might possess as a policeman possesses; but not by arms could they gain the quality that made Paris, any more than the Roman legionary became a Greek scholar by doing sentry go in front of the Parthenon. Every Parisian felt anew how dear Paris was to him; how worthy of some great sacrifice!

If New York were in danger of falling to an enemy, the splendid length of Fifth Avenue and the majesty

of the sky-scrapers of lower Broadway and the bay and the rivers would become vivid to you in a way they never had before; or Washington, or San Francisco, or Boston — or your own town. The thing that is a commonplace, when you are about to lose it takes on a cherished value.

To-morrow the German guns might be thundering in front of the fortifications. The *communiqués* from Joffre became less frequent and more laconic. Their wording was like some trembling, fateful needle of a barometer, pausing, reacting a little, but going down, down, down, indicator of the heart-pressure of Paris, shrivelling the flesh, tightening the nerves. Already Paris was in siege, in one sense. Her exits were guarded against all who were not in uniform and going to fight; to all who had no purpose except to see what was passing where two hundred miles resounded with strife. It was enough to see Paris itself awaiting the siege; fighting one was yet to see to repletion.

The situation must be very bad or the Government would not have gone to Bordeaux. *Alors,* one must trust the army and the army must trust Joffre. There is no trust like that of a democracy when it gives its heart to a cause; the trust of the mass in the strength of the mass which sweeps away the middleman of intrigue.

And silence, only silence, in Paris; the silence of the old men and the women, and of children who had ceased to play and could not understand. No one might see what was going on unless he carried a rifle. No one might see even the wounded. Paris was spared this, isolated in the midst of war. The wounded were sent out of reach of the Germans in case they should come.

Then the indicator stopped falling. It throbbed upward. The *communiqués* became more definite; they told of positions regained, and borne in the ether by the wireless of telepathy was something which confirmed the *communiqués*. At first Paris was uneasy with the news, so set had history been on repeating itself, so remorselessly certain had seemed the German advance. But it was true, true — the Germans were going, with the French in pursuit, now twenty, now thirty, now forty, now fifty, sixty, seventy miles away from Paris. Yes, monsieur, seventy!

With the needle rising, did Paris gather in crowds and surge through the streets, singing and shouting itself hoarse, as it ought to have done according to the popular international idea? No, monsieur, Paris will not riot in joy in the presence of the dead on the battlefields and while German troops are still within the boundaries of France. Paris, which had been with heart standing still and breathing hard, began to breathe regularly again and the glow of life to run through its veins. In the markets, whither Madame brought succulent melons, pears, and grapes with commonplace vegetables, the talk of bargaining housewives with their baskets had something of its old vivacity and Madame stiffened prices a little, for there will be heavy taxes to pay for the war. Children, so susceptible to surroundings, broke out of the quiet alleys and doorways in play again.

A Sunday of relief, with a radiant September sun shining, followed a Sunday of depression. The old taxicabs and the horse vehicles with their venerable steeds and drivers too old for service at the front, exhumed from the catacomb of the hours of doubt, ran up and down the Champs Élysées with airing par-

ties. At Nôtre Dame the religious rejoicing was expressed. A great service of prayer was held by the priests who were not away fighting for France, as three thousand are, while joyful prayers of thanks shone on the faces of that democratic people who have not hesitated to discipline the church as they have disciplined their rulers. Groups gathered in the cafés or sauntered slowly, talking less than usual, gesticulating little, rolling over the good news in their minds as something beyond the power of expression. How banal to say, "*C'est chic, ça!*" or, "*C'est épatant!*" Language is for little things.

That pile of posters at the American Embassy was already historical souvenirs which won a smile. The name of every American resident in Paris and his address had been filled in the blank space. He had only to put up the warning over his door that the premises were under the Embassy's protection. Ambassador Herrick, suave, decisive, resourceful, possessed the gift of acting in a great emergency with the same ease and simplicity as in a small one, which is a gift sometimes found wanting when a crisis breaks upon the routine of official life.

He had the courage to act and the ability to secure a favour for an American when it was reasonable; and the courage to say "No" if it were unreasonable or impracticable. No one of the throngs who had business with him was kept long at the door in uncertainty. In its organisation for facilitating the home-going of the thousands of Americans in Paris and the Americans coming to Paris from other parts of Europe, the American Embassy in Paris seemed as well mobilised for its part in the war as the German army.

In spite of '70, France still lived. You noted the

faces of the women in fresh black for their dead at the front, a little drawn but proud and victorious. The son or brother or husband had died for the country. When a fast automobile bearing officers had a German helmet or two displayed, the people stopped to look. A captured German in the flesh on a front seat beside a soldier chauffeur brought the knots to a standstill. *"Voilà! C'est un Allemand!"* ran the universal exclamation. But Paris soon became used to these stray German prisoners, left-overs from the German retreat coming in from the fields to surrender. The batches went through by train without stopping for Paris, southward to the camps where they were to be interned; and the trains of wounded to winter resorts, whose hotels became hospitals, the verandas occupied by convalescents instead of gossiping tourists. It is *très à la mode* to be wounded, monsieur — *très à la mode* all over Europe.

And, monsieur, all those barricades put up for nothing! They will not need the cattle gathered on Longchamps race-track and in the parks at Versailles for a siege. The people who laid in stocks of canned goods till the groceries of Paris were empty of everything in tins — they would either have to live on canned food or confess that they were pigs, *hein?* Those volunteers, whether young men who had been excused because they were only sons or for weak hearts which now let them past the surgeons, whether big, hulking farmers, or labourers, or stooped clerks, drilling in awkward squads in the suburbs till they are dizzy, they will not have to defend Paris; but, perhaps, help to regain Alsace and Lorraine.

Then there were stories going the rounds; stories of French courage and *élan* which were cheering to

the ears of those who had to remain at home. Did you hear about the big French peasant soldier who captured a Prussian eagle in Alsace? They had him come to Paris to give him the Legion of Honour and the great men made a ceremony of it, gathering around him at the Ministry of War. The simple fellow looked from one to another of the group, surprised at all this attention. It did not occur to him that he had done anything remarkable. He had seen a Prussian with a standard and taken the standard away from that Prussian.

"If you like this so well," said that droll one, "I'll try to get another!"

*C'est un vrai Français,* that *garçon.* What?

# V

## ON THE HEELS OF VON KLUCK

An excursion to the front — The magic of a military pass — The high-water mark of German shells — Return of the refugees — Fate of the villages — War's results — Burying the dead — The victorious spirit of France — Approaching the line — Roll and smoke of the guns — Passing the motor transports — Army organisation — Line reserves — Newspapers and tobacco — Soissons deserted — Stoicism of the townspeople — German prisoners — The Sixth Army headquarters — A town in ruins — Character of French women — French democracy and humanity.

THOUGH the Germans were going, the siege by the cordon of French guards around Paris had not been raised. To them every civilian was a possible spy. So they let no civilians by. Must one remain forever in Paris, screened from any view of the great drama? Was there no way of securing a blue card which would open the road to war for an atom of humanity who wanted to see Frenchmen in action and not to pry into generals' plans?

Happily, an army winning is more hospitable than an army losing; and bonds of friendship which stretch around the world could be linked with authority which has only to say the word in order that one might have a day's glimpse of the fields where von Kluck's Germans were showing their heels to the French.

Ours, I think, was the pioneer of the sightseeing parties which afterward became the accepted form of war correspondence with the French. None could have been under more delightful auspices in companionship or in the event. Victory was in the hearts of

our hosts, who included M. Paul Doumer, formerly president of the Chamber of Deputies and governor of French Indo-China and now a senator, and General Fevrier, of the French Medical Service, who was to have had charge of the sanitation of Paris in case of a siege.

M. Doumer was acting as *Chef de Cabinet* to General Gallieni, the commandant of Paris, and he and General Fevrier and two other officers of Gallieni's staff, who would have been up to their eyes in work if there had been a siege, wanted to see something of that army whose valour had given them a holiday. Why should not Roberts and myself come along? which is the pleasant way the French have of putting an invitation.

The other member of the party was the veteran European correspondent and representative of the Associated Press in Paris, Elmer Roberts, who would not be doing his duty to Melville E. Stone if he did not arrange for opportunities of this kind. I was really hanging onto Roberts's coat-tails. Other men may have publicity as individuals in a single newspaper or magazine, but the readers of a thousand newspapers take their news from Paris through him without knowing his name.

Oh, the magic of a military pass and the companionship of an officer in uniform! It separates you from the crowd of millions on the other side of the blank wall of military secrecy and takes you into the area of the millions in uniform; it wins a nod of consent from that middle-aged reservist on a road whose bayonet has the police power of millions of bayonets in support of its authority.

At last one was to see; the measure of his impres-

sions was to be his own eyes and not the written reports. Other passes I have had since, which gave me the run of trenches and shell-fire areas; but this pass opened the first door to the war. That day we ran by Meaux and to Château Thierry to Soissons and back by Senlis to Paris. We saw a finger's breadth of battle area; a pin point of army front. Only a ride along a broad, fine road out of Paris, at first; a road which our cars had all to themselves. Then at Claye we came to the high-water mark of the German invasion. This close to Paris in that direction and no closer had the Germans come.

There was the field where the skirmishers had turned back. Farther on, the branches of the avenue of trees which shaded the road had been slashed as if by a whirlwind of knives, where the French *soixante-quinze* field guns had found a target. Under that sudden bath of projectiles, with the French infantry pressing forward on their front, the German gunners could not wait to take away the cord of five-inch shells which they had piled to blaze their way to Paris. One guessed their haste and their irritation. They were within range of the fortifications; within two hours' march of the suburbs of the Mecca of forty years of preparation. After all that march from Belgium, with no break in the programme of success, the thunders broke and lightning flashed out of the sky as Manoury's army rushed upon von Kluck's flank.

"It was not the way that they wanted us to get the shells," said a French peasant, who was taking one of the shell baskets for a souvenir. It would make an excellent umbrella stand.

For the French it had been the turn of the tide;

for that little British army which had fought its way back from Mons it was the sweet dream, which had kept men up on the retreat, come true. Weary Germans, after a fearful two weeks of effort, became the driven. Weary British and French turned drivers. A hypodermic of victory renewed their energy. Paris was at their back and the German backs in front. They were no longer leaving their dead and wounded behind to the foe; they were sweeping past the dead and wounded of the foe.

But their happiness, that of a winning action, exalted and passionate, had not the depths of that of the refugees who had fled before the German hosts and were returning to their homes in the wake of their victorious army. We passed farmers with children perched on top of carts laden with household goods and drawn by broad-backed farm-horses, with usually another horse or a milch cow tied behind. The real power of France these peasants, holding fast to the acres they own, with the fire of the French nature under their thrifty conservatism. Others on foot were villagers who had lacked horses or carts to transport their belongings. In the packs on their backs were a few precious things which they had borne away and were now bearing back.

Soon they would know what the Germans had done to their homes. What the Germans had done to one piano was evident. It stood in the yard of a house where grass and flowers had been trodden by horses and men. In the sport of victory the piano had been dragged out of the little drawing-room, while Fritz and Hans played and sang in the intoxication of a Paris gained, a France in submission. They did not know what Joffre had in pickle for them. It had all

gone according to programme up to that moment. Nothing can stop us Germans! Champagne instead of beer! Set the glass on top of the piano and sing! Haven't we waited forty years for this day?

Captured diaries of German officers, which reflect the seventh heaven of elation suddenly turned into grim depression, taken in connection with what one saw on the battlefield, reconstruct the scene around that piano. The cup to the lips; then dashed away. How those orders to retreat must have hurt!

The state of the refugees' homes all depended upon the chances of war. War's lightning might have hit your roof tree and it might not. It plays no favourites between the honest and the dishonest; the thrifty and the shiftless. We passed villages which exhibited no signs of destruction or of looting. The German troops had marched through in the advance and in the retreat without being billeted. A hurrying army with another on its heels has no time for looting. Other villages had been points of topical importance; they had been in the midst of a fight. General *Mauvaise Chance* had it in for them. Shells had wrecked some houses; others were burned. Where a German non-commissioned officer came to the door of a French family and said that room must be made for German soldiers in that house and if any one dared to interfere with them he would be shot, there the exhausted human nature of a people trained to think that *"Krieg ist Krieg"* and that the spoils of war are to the victor had its way.

It takes generations to lift a man up a single degree; but so swift is the effect of war, when men live a day in a year, that he is demonised in a month. Before the occupants had to go, often windows were broken,

crockery smashed, closets and drawers rifled. The soldiery which could not have its Paris "took it out" of the property of their hosts. Looting, destruction, one can forgive in the orgy of war which is organised destruction; one can even understand rapine and atrocities when armies, which include latent vile and criminal elements, are aroused to the kind of insane passion which war arouses in human beings. But some indecencies one could not understand in civilised men. All with a military purpose, it is said; for in the nice calculations of a staff system which grinds so very fine, nothing must be excluded that will embarrass the enemy. A certain foully disgusting practice was too common not to have the approval of at least some officers, whose conduct in several châteaus includes them as accomplices. Not all officers, not all soldiers. That there should be a few is enough to sicken you of belonging to the human species. Nothing worse in Central America; nothing worse where civilised degeneracy disgraces savagery.

But do not think that destruction for destruction's sake was done in all houses where German soldiers were billeted. If the good principle was not sufficiently impressed, Belgium must have impressed it; a looting army is a disorderly army. The soldier has burden enough to carry in heavy marching order without souvenirs. That collector of the glass tops of carafes who had thirty on his person when taken prisoner was bound to be a laggard in the retreat.

To their surprise and relief, returning farmers found their big, conical haystacks untouched, though nothing could be more tempting to the wantonness of an army on enemy soil. Strike a match and up goes the harvest! Perhaps the Germans as they advanced

had in mind to save the forage for their own horses, and either they were running too fast to stop or the staff overlooked the detail on the retreat.

It was amazing how few signs of battle there were in the open. Occasionally one saw the hastily made shelter trenches of a skirmish line; and again, the emplacements for batteries — hurried field emplacements, so puny beside those of trench warfare. It had been open fighting; the tide of an army sweeping forward and then, pursued, sweeping back. One side was trying to get away; the other to overtake. Here, a rearguard made a determined action which would have had the character of a battle in other days; there, a rearguard was pinched as the French or the British got around it.

Swift marching and quick manœuvres of the type which gave war some of its old sport and zest; the advance, all the while gathering force, like the deep tide! Crowds of men hurrying across a harvested wheat-field or a pasture after all leave few marks of passage. A day's rain will wash away the blood stains and liven trampled vegetation. Nature hastens with a kind of contempt of man to repair the damage done by his murderous wrath.

The cyclone past, the people turned out to put things in order. Peasants too old to fight, who had paid the taxes which paid for the rifles and guns and hell-fire, were moving across the fields with spades, burying the bodies of the young men and the horses that were war's victims. Long trenches full of dead told where the eddy of battle had been fierce and the casualties numerous; scattered mounds of fresh earth where they were light; and sometimes, when the burying was unfinished — well, one draws the curtain over scenes like

that in the woods at Betz, where Frenchmen died knowing that Paris was saved and Germans died knowing that they had failed to take Paris.

Whenever we halted our statesman, M. Doumer, was active. Did we have difficulties over a culvert which had been hastily mended, he was out of the car and in command. Always he was meeting some man whom he knew and shaking hands like a senator at home. At one place a private soldier, a man of education by his speech, came running across the street at sight of him.

"Son of an old friend of mine, from my town," said our statesman. Being a French private meant being any kind of a Frenchman. All inequalities are levelled in the ranks of a great conscript army.

Be it through towns unharmed or towns that had been looted and shelled, the people had the smile of victory, the look of victory in their eyes. Children and old men and women, the stay-at-homes, waved to our car in holiday spirit. The laugh of a sturdy young woman who threw some flowers into the tonneau as we passed, in her tribute to the uniform of the army that had saved France, had the spirit of victorious France — France after forty years' waiting throwing back a foe that had two soldiers to every one of hers. All the land, rich fields and neat gardens and green stretches of woods in the fair, rolling landscape, basked in victory. Dead the spirit of any one who could not, for the time being, catch the infection of it and feel himself a Frenchman. Far from the Paris of gay show for the tourist one seemed; in the midst of the France of the farms and the villages which had saved Paris and France.

The car sped on over the hard road. Staff officers

in other cars whom we passed alone suggested that there was war somewhere ahead. Were we never going to reach the battle-line, the magnet of our speed when a French army chauffeur made all speed laws obsolete!

Shooting out of a grove, a valley made a channel for sound that brought to our ears the thunder of guns, the firing so rapid that it was like the roll of some cyclopean snare-drum beaten with sticks the size of ship-masts. From the crest of the next hill we had a glimpse of an open sweep of parklike country toward wooded hills. As far as we could see against the background of the foliage throwing it into relief was a continuous cloud of smoke from bursting shrapnel shells, renewed with fresh, soft, blue puffs as fast as it was dissipated.

This, then, was a battle. No soldiers, no guns in sight; only a diaphanous, man-made nimbus against masses of autumn green which was raining steel hail. Ten miles of this, one ..ould say; and under it lines of men in blue coats and red trousers and green uniforms hugging the earth, as unseen as a battalion of ants at work in the tall grass. Even if a charge swept across a field one would have been able to detect nothing except moving pin-points on a carpet.

There was hard fighting; a lot of French and Germans were being killed in the direction of Compiègne and Noyon to-day. Another dip into another valley and the thir-r-r of a rapid-firer and the muffled firing of a line of infantry were audible. Yes, we were getting up with the army, with one tiny section of it operating along the road we were on. Multiply this by a thousand and you have the whole.

Ahead was the army's stomach on wheels; a pro-

cession of big motor transport trucks keeping their intervals of distance with the precision of a battleship fleet at sea. We should have known that they belonged to the army by the deafness of the drivers to appeals to let us pass. All army transports are like that. What the deuced right has anybody to pass? They are the transport, and only fighting men belong in front of them. Our automobile in trying to go by to one side got stuck in a rut that an American car, built for bad roads, would have made nothing of; which proves again how clearly European armies are tied to their fine roads. We got out, and here was our statesman putting his shoulder to the wheel again. That is the way of the French in war. Everybody tries to help. By this time the transport chauffeurs also remembered that they were Frenchmen; and as Frenchmen are polite even in time of war, they let us by.

A motor-cyclist approached with his hand up.

"Stop here!" he called.

Those transport chauffeurs who were deaf to ex-premiers heard instantly and obeyed. In front of them was a line of single horse-drawn carts, with an extra horse in the rear. They could take paths that the motor-trucks could not. Archaic they seemed, yet friendly, as a relic of how armies were fed in other days. For the first time I was realising what the automobile means to war. It brings the army impedimenta close up to the army's rear; it means a reduction of road space occupied by transport by three-quarters; ease in keeping pace with food with the advance, speed in falling back in case of retreat.

All that day I did not see a single piece of French army transport broken down. And this army had

been fighting for weeks; it had been an army on the road. The valuable part of our experience was exactly in this: a glimpse of an army in action after it had been through all the vicissitudes that an army may have in marching and counter-marching and attack. Order one was to expect afterwards behind the siege line of trenches when there had been time to establish a routine; organisation and smooth organisation you had here at the climax of a month's strain. It told the story of the character of the French army and the reasons for its success other than its courage. The brains were not all with the German Staff.

That winding road, with a new picture at every turn, now revealed the town of Soissons in the valley of the River Aisne. Soissons was ours, we knew, since yesterday. How much farther had we gone? Was our advance still continuing? For then, the winter trench-fighting was unforeseen and the sightseers thought of the French army as following up success with success. Paris, rising from gloom to optimism, hoped to see the Germans put out of France. The appetite for victory grew after a week's bulletins which moved the flags forward on the map every day.

Another turn and Soissons was hidden from view by a woodland. Here we came upon what looked like a leisurely family party of reserves. The French army, a small section of French army along a road! And thus, if one would see the whole it must be in bits along the roads when not on the firing-line. They were sprawling in the fields in the genial afternoon sun, looking as if they had no concern except to rest. Uniforms dusty and faces tanned and bearded told their story of the last month.

The duty of a portion of a force is always to wait

on what is being done by the others at the front. These were waiting near a forks which could take them to the right or the left, as the situation demanded. At their rear, their supply of small arms ammunition; in front, caissons of shells for a battery speaking from the woods near by; a troop of cavalry drawn up, the men dismounted, ready; and ahead of them more reserves ready; everything ready.

This was where the general wanted the body of men and equipment to be, and here they were. There were no dragging ends in the rear, so far as I could see; nobody complaining that food or ammunition was not up; no aide looking for somebody who could not be found; no excited staff officer rushing about shouting for somebody to look sharp for somebody had made a mistake. The thing was unwarlike; it was like a particularly well-thought-out route march. Yet at the word that company of cavalry might be in the thick of it, at the point where they were wanted; the infantry rushing to the support of the firing-line; the motor transport facing around for withdrawal, if need be. It was only a little way, indeed, into the zone of death from the rear of that compact column.

Thousands of such compact bodies on as many roads, each seemingly a force by itself and each a part of the whole, which could be a dependable whole only when every part was ready, alert, and up where it belonged! Nothing can be left to chance in a battle-line three hundred miles long. The general must know what to depend on, mile by mile, in his plans. Millions of human units are grouped in increasingly larger units, harmonised according to set forms. The most complex of all machines is that of a vast army,

which yet must be kept most simple. No unit acts without regard to the others; every one must know how to do his part. The parts of the machine are standardised. One is like the other in training, uniform, and every detail, so that one can replace another. Oldest of all trades this of war; old experts the French. What one saw was like manœuvres. It must be like manœuvres or the army would not hold together. Manœuvres are to teach armies coherence; war tries out that coherence, which you may not have if some one does not know just what to do; if he is uncertain in his rôle. Haste leads to confusion; haste is only for supreme moments. In order to know how to hasten when the hurry call comes, the mighty organism must move in its routine with the smoothness of a well-rehearsed play.

Joffre and the others who directed the machine must know more than the mechanics of staff-control. They must know the character of the man-material in the machine. It was their duty as real Frenchmen to understand Frenchmen, their verve, their restlessness for the offensive, their individualism, their democratic intelligence, the value of their elation, the drawback of their tendency to depression and to think for themselves. Indeed, the leader must counteract the faults of his people and make the most of their virtues.

Thus, we had a French army's historical part reversed: a French army falling back and concentrating on the Marne to receive the enemy blow. Equally alive to German racial traits, the German Staff had organised in their mass offensive the *élan* which means fast marching and hard blows. Thus, we found the supposedly excitable French digging in to receive the

onslaught of the supposedly phlegmatic German. When the time came for the charge — ah, you can always depend on a Frenchman to charge!

Those reserves were pawns on a chessboard. They appeared like it; one thought that they realised it. Their individual intelligence and democracy had reasoned out the value of obedience and homogeneity, rather than accepted the dictum of any war lord. Difficult to think that each had left a vacancy at a family board; difficult to think that they were not automatons in a process of endless routine of war; but not difficult to learn that they were Frenchmen once we had thrown our bombs in the midst of the group.

Of old, one knew the wants of soldiers. One needed no hint of what was welcome at the front. Never at any front were there enough newspapers or tobacco. Men smoke twice as much as usual in the strain of waiting for action, men who do not use tobacco at all get the habit. Ask the G. A. R. men who fought in our great war if this is not true. Then, too, when your country is at war, when back at home hands stretch for every fresh edition and you at the front know only what happens in your alley, think what a newspaper from Paris means out on the battle-line seventy miles from Paris. So I brought a bundle of newspapers.

Monsieur, the sensation is beyond even the French language to express — the sensation of sitting down by the roadside with this morning's edition and the first cigarette for twenty-four hours.

*"C'est épatant! C'est chic, ça! C'est magnifique! Alors, nom de Dieu! Tiens! Hélas! Voilà! Merci, mille remerciements!"* — it was an army of Frenchmen with ready words, quick, telling gestures,

pouring out their volume of thanks as the car sped by, and we tossed out our newspapers at intervals, so that all should have a look.

An *Écho de Paris* that fell into the road was the centre of a flag-rush, which included an officer. Most unmilitary — an officer scrambling at the same time as his men! In the name of the Kaiser, what discipline!

Then the car stopped long enough for me to see a private give the paper to his officer, who was plainly sensible of a loss of dignity, with the courtesy which said, "A thousand pardons, *mon capitaine!*" and the *capitaine* began reading the newspaper aloud to his men. Scores of human touches which were French, republican, democratic!

With half our cigarettes gone, we fell in with some brown-skinned, native African troops, the Mohammedan Turcos. Their white teeth gleaming, their black eyes devilishly eager, they began climbing onto the car. We gave them all the cigarettes in sight; but fortunately our reserve supply was not visible, and an officer's sharp command saved us from being invested by storm.

As we came into Soissons we left the reserves behind. They were kept back out of range of the German shells, making the town a dead space between them and the firing-line which was beyond. When the Germans retreated through the streets the French had taken care, as it was their town, to keep their fire away from the cathedral and the main square to the outskirts and along the river. Not so the German guns when the French infantry passed through. Soissons was not a German town.

We alighted from the car in a deserted street, with

all the shutters of shops that had not been torn down by shell-fire closed. Soissons was as silent as the grave, within easy range of many enemy guns. War seemed only for the time being in this valley bottom shut in from the roar of artillery a few miles away, except for a French battery which was firing methodically and slowly, its shells whizzing toward the ridge back of the town.

The next thing that one wanted most was to go into that battery and see the *soixante-quinze* and their skilful gunners. Our statesman said that he would try to locate it. We thought that it was in the direction of the river, that famous Aisne which has since given its name to the longest siege-line in history; a small, winding stream in the bottom of an irregular valley. Both bridges across it had been cut by the Germans. If that battery were on the opposite side under cover of any one of a score of blots of foliage we could not reach it. Another shot — and we were not sure that the battery was not on the other side of the town; a crack out of the landscape: this was modern artillery fire to one who faced it. Apparently the guns of the battery were scattered, according to the accepted practice, and from the central firing-station word to fire was being passed first to one gun and then to another.

Beside the buttress of one bridge lay two still figures of Algerian Zouaves. These were fresh dead, fallen in the taking of the town. Only two men! There were dead by thousands which one might see in other places. These two had leaped out from cover to dash forward and bullets were waiting for them. They had rolled over on their backs, their rigid hands still in the position of grasping their rifles after the manner of crouching skirmishers.

Our statesman said that we had better give up trying to locate the battery; and one of the officers called a halt to trying to go up to the firing-line on the part of a personally conducted party, after we stopped a private hurrying back from the front on some errand. With his alertness, the easy swing of his walk, his light step, and that freedom in spirit and appearance, he typified the thing which the French call *élan*. Whenever one asked a question of a French private you could depend upon a direct answer. He knew or he did not know. This definiteness, the result of military training, as well as the Gallic lucidity of thought, is not the least of the human factors in making an efficient army, where every man and every unit must definitely know his part. This young man, you realised, had tasted the "salt of life," as Lord Kitchener calls it. He had heard the close sing of bullets; he had known the intoxication of a charge.

"Does everything go well?" M. Doumer asked.

"It is not going at all, now. It is sticking," was the answer. "Some Germans were busy up there in the stone quarries while the others were falling back. They have a covered trench and rapid-fire gun positions to sweep a zone of fire which they have cleared."

Famous stone quarries of Soissons, providing ready-made dugouts as shelter from shells!

There is a story of how before Marengo Napoleon heard a private saying: "Now this is what the general ought to do!" It was Napoleon's own plan revealed. "You keep still!" he said. "This army has too many generals."

"They mean to make a stand," the private went on. "It's an ideal place for it. There is no use of an

attack in front. We'd be mowed down by machine guns." The br-r-r of a dozen shots from a German machine gun gave point to his conclusion. "Our infantry is hugging what we have and entrenching. You better not go up. One has to know the way, or he'll walk right into a sharpshooter's bullet"—instructions that would have been applicable a year later when you were about to visit a British trench in almost the same location.

The siege warfare of the Aisne line had already begun. It was singular to get the first news of it from a private in Soissons and then to return to Paris and London, on the other side of the curtain of secrecy, where the public thought that the Allied advance would continue.

"*Allons!*" said our statesman, and we went to the town square, where German guns had carpeted the ground with branches of shade trees and torn off the fronts of houses, revealing sections of looted interior which had been further messed by shell-bursts. Some women and children and a crippled man came out-of-doors at sight of us. M. Doumer introduced himself and shook hands all around. They were glad to meet him in much the same way as if he had been on an election campaign.

"A German shell struck there across the square only half an hour ago," said one of the women.

"What do you do when there is shelling?" asked M. Doumer.

"If it is bad we go into the cellar," was the answer; an answer which implied that peculiar fearlessness of women, who get accustomed to fire easier than men. These were the fatalists of the town, who would not turn refugee; helpless to fight, but grimly staying with

their homes and accepting what came with an incomprehensible stoicism, which possibly had its origin in a race-feeling so proud and bitter that they would not admit that they could be afraid of anything German, even a shell.

"And how did the Germans act?"

"They made themselves at home in our houses and slept in our beds, while we slept in the kitchen," she answered. "They said if we kept indoors and gave them what they wanted we should not be harmed. But if any one fired a shot at their troops or any arms were found in our houses, they would burn the town. When they were going back in a great hurry — how they scattered from *our* shells! We went out in the square to see *our* shells, monsieur!"

What mattered the ruins of her home? *Our* shells had returned vengeance.

Arrows with directions in German, "This way to the river," "This way to Villers-Cotteret," were chalked on the standing walls; and on door-casings the names of the detachments of the Prussian Guard billeted there, all in systematic Teutonic fashion.

"Prince Albrecht Joachim, one of the Kaiser's sons, was here and I talked with him," said the Mayor, who thought we should enjoy a morsel from court circles in exchange for a copy of the *Écho de Paris* which contained the news that Prince Albrecht had been wounded later. The mayor looked tired, this local man of the people, who had to play the shepherd of a stricken flock. Afterwards, they said that he deserted his charge and a lady, Mme. Macherez, took his place. All I know is that he was present that day; or at least a man who was introduced to me as mayor; and he was French enough to make a *bon mot* by saying that he

feared there was some fault in his hospitality because he had been unable to keep his guest.

"May I have this *confiture?*" asked a battle-stained French orderly, coming up to him. "I found it in that ruined house there — all the Germans had left. I haven't had a *confiture* for a long time and, monsieur, you cannot imagine what a hunger I have for *confitures.*"

All the while the French battery kept on firing slowly, then again rapidly, their cracks trilling off like the drum of knuckles on a table-top. Another effort to locate one of the guns before we started back to Paris failed. Speeding on, we had again a glimpse of the landscape toward Noyon, sprinkled with shell-bursts. The reserves were around their campfires making savoury stews for the evening meal. They would sleep where night found them on the sward under the stars, as in wars of old. That scene remains indelible as one of many while the army was yet mobile, before the contest became one of the mole and of the beaver.

Though one had already seen many German prisoners in groups and convoys, the sight of two on the road fixed the attention because of the surroundings and the contrast suggested between French and German natures. Both were young, in the very prime of life, and both Prussian. One was dark-complexioned, with a scrubbly beard which was the product of the war. He marched with such rigidity that I should not have been surprised to see him break into a goose-step. The other was of that mild, blue-eyed, tow-haired type from the Baltic provinces, with the thin white skin which does not tan but burns. He was frailer than the other and he was tired; oh, how tired! He would lag

and then stiffen back his shoulders and draw in his chin and force a trifle more energy into his step.

A typical, lively French soldier was escorting the pair. He looked pretty tired, too, but he was getting over the ground in the natural, easy way in which man is meant to walk. The aboriginal races, who have a genius for long distances on foot, do not march in the German fashion, which looks impressive, but lacks endurance. By the same logic, the cayuse's gait is better for thirty miles day in and day out than the high-stepping carriage horse's.

You could realise the contempt which those two martial Germans had for their captor. Four or five peasant women refugees by the roadside unloosened their tongues in piercing feminine satire and upbraiding.

"You are going to Paris, after all! This is what you get for invading our country; and you'll get more of it!"

The little French soldier held up his hand to the women and shook his head. He was a chivalrous fellow, with imagination enough to appreciate the feelings of an enemy who has fought hard and lost. Such as he would fight fair and hold this war of the civilisations up to something like the standards of civilisation.

The very tired German stiffened up again, as his drill sergeant had taught him, and both stared straight ahead, proud and contemptuous, as their Kaiser would wish them to do. I should recognise the faces of these two Germans and of that little French guard if I saw them ten years hence. In ten years, what will be the Germans' attitude toward this war and their military lords?

It is not often that one has a senator for a guide;

and I never knew a more efficient one than our statesman. His own curiosity was the best possible aid in satisfying our own. Having seen the compactness and simplicity of an army column at the front, we were to find that the same thing applied to high command. A sentry and a small flag at the doorway of a village hotel: this was the headquarters of the Sixth Army, which General Manoury had formed in haste and flung at von Kluck with a spirit which crowned his white hairs with the audacity of youth. He was absent, but we might see something of the central direction of one hundred and fifty thousand men in the course of one of the most brilliant manœuvres of the war, before staffs had settled down to office existence in permanent quarters. That is, we might see the little there was to see: a soldier telegrapher in one bedroom, a soldier typewritist in another, officers at work in others. One realised that they could pack up everything and move in the time it takes to toss enough clothes into a bag to spend a night away from home. Apparently, when the French fought they left red tape behind with the bureaucracy.

From his seat before a series of maps on a sitting-room table an officer of about thirty-five rose to receive us. It struck me that he exemplified self-possessed intelligence and definite knowledge; that he had coolness and steadiness plus that acuteness of perception and clarity of statement which are the gift of the French. You felt sure that no orders which left his hand wasted any words or lacked explicitness. The Staff is the brains of the army, and he had brains.

"All goes well!" he said, as if there were no more to say. All goes well! He would say it when things

looked black or when they looked bright, and in a way that would make others believe it.

Outside the hotel were no cavalry escorts or commanders, no hurrying orderlies, none of the legendary physical activity that is associated with an army headquarters. An automobile drove up, an officer got out; another officer descended the stairs to enter a waiting car. The wires carry word faster than the cars. Each subordinate commander was in his place along that line where we had seen the puffs of smoke against the landscape, ready to answer a question or obey an order. That simplicity, like art itself, which seems so easy is the most difficult accomplishment of all in war.

After dark, in a drizzling rain, we came to what seemed to be a town, for our automobile lamps spread their radiant streams over wet pavements. But these were the only lights. Tongues of loose brick had been shot across the cobblestones and dimly the jagged skyline of broken walls of buildings on either side could be discovered. It was Senlis, the first town I had seen which could be classified as a town in ruins. Afterwards, one became a sort of specialist in ruins, comparing the latest with previous examples of destruction.

Approaching footsteps broke the silence. A small, very small, French soldier — he was not more than five feet two — appeared and we followed him to an ambulance that had broken down for want of gasoline. It belonged to the Société de Femmes de France. The little soldier had put on a uniform as a volunteer for the only service his stature would permit. In those days many volunteer organisations were busy seeking to "help." There was a kind of competition among

them for wounded. This ambulance had got one and was taking him to Paris, off the regular route of the wounded who were being sent south. The boot-soles of a prostrate figure showed out of the dark recess of the interior. This French officer, a major, had been hit in the shoulder. He tried to control the catch in his voice which belied his assertion that he was suffering little pain. The drizzling rain was chilly. It was a long way to Paris yet.

"We will make inquiries," said our kindly general.

A man who came out of the gloom said that there was a hospital kept by some Sisters of Charity in Senlis which had escaped destruction. The question was put into the recesses of the ambulance:

"Would you prefer to spend the night here and go on in the morning?"

"Yes, monsieur, I — should — like — that — better!" The tone left no doubt of the relief that the journey in a car with poor springs was not to be continued after hours of waiting, marooned in the street of a ruined town.

While the ambulance passed inside the hospital gate, I spoke with an elderly woman who came to a nearby door. Cool and definite she was as a French soldier, bringing home the character of the women of France which this war has made so well-known to the world.

"Were you here during the fighting?"

"Yes, monsieur, and during the shelling and the burning. The shelling was not enough. The Germans said that some one fired on their soldiers — a boy, I believe — so they set fire to the houses. One could only look and hate and pray as their soldiers passed through, looking so unconquerable, making all seem so terrible for France. Was it to be '70

over again? One's heart was of stone, monsieur. *Tiens!* They came back faster than they went. A mitrailleuse was down there at the end of the street, our mitrailleuse! The bullets went cracking by. They crack, the bullets; they do not whistle like the stories say. Then the street was empty of Germans who could run. The dead they could not run, nor the wounded. Then the French came up the street, running, too — running after the Germans. It was good, monsieur, good, good! My heart was not of stone then, monsieur. It could not beat fast enough for happiness. It was the heart of a girl. I remember it all very clearly. I always shall, monsieur."

"*Allons!*" said our statesman. "The officer is well cared for."

The world seemed normal again as we passed through other towns unharmed and swept by the dark countryside, till a red light rose in our path and a sharp "*Qui vive?*" came out of the night as we slowed down. This was not the only sentry call from a French Territorial in front of a barricade.

At a second halt we found a chain as well as a barricade across the road. For a moment it seemed that even the suave parliamentarism of our statesman or the authority of our general and our passes could not convince one grizzled reservist, doing his duty for France at the rear while the young men were at the front, that we had any right to be going into Paris at that hour of the night. The password, which was "Paris," helped, and we felt it a most appropriate password as we came to the broad streets of the city that was safe.

There is a popular idea that Napoleon was a supergenius who won all his battles alone. It is wrong.

He had a lot of Frenchmen along to help. Much the same kind of Frenchmen live to-day. Not until they fought again would the world believe this. It seems that the excitable Gaul, whom some people thought would become demoralised in face of German organisation, merely talks with his hands. In a great crisis he is cool, as he always was. I like the French for their democracy and humanity. I like them, too, for leaving their war to France and Marianne; for not dragging in God as do the Germans. For it is just possible that God is not in the fight. We don't know that He even approved of the war.

# VI

## AND CALAIS WAITS

Calais, the objective of a struggle for world power — Last reserves of the British — A city of refugees — Heroic care of the wounded — "Life going on as usual" — The cheerful Belgians — In a French hospital — An astonished but happy Tommy.

To the traveller, Calais had been the symbol of the shortest route from London to Paris, the shortest spell of torment in crossing the British Channel. It was a point where one felt infinite relief or sad physical anticipations. In the last days of November Calais became the symbol of a struggle for world power. The British and the French were fighting to hold Calais; the Germans to get it. In Calais Germany would have her foot on the Atlantic coast. She could look across only twenty-two miles of water to the chalk cliffs at Dover. She would be as near her rival as twice the length of Manhattan Island; within the range of a modern gun; within an hour by steamer and twenty minutes by aeroplane.

The long battle-front from Switzerland to the North Sea had been established. There was no getting around the Allied flank; there had ceased to be a flank. To win Calais, Germany must crush through without any manœuvre by main force. From the cafés where the British newspaper men gathered England received its news, which they gleaned from refugees and stragglers and passing officers. They wrote something every day, for England must have something

about that dizzy head-on wrestle in the mud, that writhing line of changing positions, of new trenches rising behind the old destroyed by German artillery. The British were fighting with their last reserves on the Ypres-Armentieres line. The French divisions to the south were suffering no less heavily, and beyond them the Belgians were trying to hold the last strip of their land under Belgian sovereignty. Cordons of guards which kept back the observer from the struggle could not keep back the truth. Something ominous was in the air.

It was worth while being in that old town as it waited on the issue in the late October rains. Its fishermen crept out in the mornings from the shelter of its quays, where refugees gathered in crowds hoping to get away by steamer. Like lost souls, carrying all the possessions they could on their backs, these refugees. There was numbness in their movements and their faces were blank — the paralysis of brain from sudden disaster. The children did not cry, but munched the dry bread which their parents gave them mechanically.

The newspaper men said that " refugee stuff " was already stale; eviction and misery were stale. Was Calais to be saved? That was the only question. If the Germans came, one thought that Madame at the hotel would still be at her desk, unruffled, businesslike, and she would still serve an excellent salad for *déjeuner;* the fishermen would still go out to sea for their daily catch.

What was going to happen? What might not happen? It was human helplessness to the last degree for all behind the wrestlers. Fate was in the battle-line. There could be no resisting that fate. If the

Germans came, they came. Belgian staff officers with their high-crowned, gilt-braided caps went flying by in their cars. There always seemed a great many Belgian staff officers back of the Belgian army in the restaurants and cafés. Habit is strong, even in war. They did not often miss their *déjeuners*. On the Dixmude line all that remained of the active Belgian Army was in a death struggle in the rain and mud. To these *shipperkes,* honour without stint, as to their gallant king.

Slightly wounded Belgians and Belgian stragglers roamed the streets of Calais. Some had a few belongings wrapped up in handkerchiefs. Others had only the clothes on their backs. Yet they were cheerful; this was the amazing thing. They moved about, laughing and chatting in groups. Perhaps this was the best way. Possibly the relief at being out of the hell at the front was the only emotion they could feel. But their cheerfulness was none the less a dash of sunlight for Calais.

The French were grim. They were still polite; they went on with their work. No unwounded French soldiers were to be seen, except the old Territorials guarding the railroad and the highways. The military organisation of France, which knew what war meant and had expected war, had drawn every man to his place and held him there with the inexorable hand of military and racial discipline. Calais had never considered caring for wounded, and the wounded poured in. I saw an automobile with a wounded man stop at a crowded corner, in the midst of refugees and soldiers; a doctor was leaning over him, and he died while the car waited.

But the newspaper men were saying that stories of

wounded men were likewise stale. So they were, for Europe was red with wounded. Train after train brought in its load from the front, and Calais tried to care for them. At least, it had buildings which would give shelter from the rain. On the floor of a railroad freight shed the wounded lay in long rows, with just enough space between them to make an alley. Those in the row against one of the walls were German prisoners. Their green uniforms melted into the stone of the wall and did not show the mud stains. Two slightly wounded had their heads together whispering. They were helplessly tired, though not as tired as most of the others, those two stalwart young men; but they seemed to be relieved, almost happy. It did not matter what happened to them, now, so long as they could rest.

Next to them a German was dying, and others badly hit were glassy-eyed in their fatigue and exhaustion. This was the word, exhaustion, for all the wounded. They had not the strength for passion or emotion. The fuel for those fires was in ashes. All they wanted in this world was to lie quiet; and some fell asleep not knowing or caring probably whether they were in Germany or in France. In the other rows, in contrast with this chameleon, baffling green, were the red trousers of the French and the dark blue of the Belgian uniforms, sharing the democracy of exhaustion with their foe.

A misty rain was falling. In a bright spot of light through a window one by one the wounded were being lifted up on to a seat, if they were not too badly hit, and onto an operating-table if they were very badly hit. A doctor and a sturdy Frenchwoman of about thirty, in spotless white, were in charge. Another

woman undid the first-aid bandage and others applied a spray. No time was lost; there were too many wounded to care for. The thing must be done as rapidly as possible before another train-load came in. If these attendants were tired, they did not know it any more than the wounded had realised their fatigue in the passion of battle. The improvised arrangement to meet an emergency had an appeal which more elaborate arrangements of organisation which I had seen lacked. It made war a little more red; humanity a little more human and kind and helpless under the scourge which it had brought on itself.

Though Calais was not prepared for wounded, when they came the women of energy and courage turned to the work without jealousy, without regard to red tape, without fastidiousness. I have in mind half a dozen other women about the streets that day in uniforms of short skirts and helmets, who belonged to some volunteer organisation which had taken some care as to its regimentals. They were types not characteristic of the whole, of whom one practical English doctor said: "We don't mind as long as they do not get in the way." Their criticisms of Calais and the arrangements were outspoken; nothing was adequate; conditions were filthy; it was shameful. They were going to write to the English newspapers about it and appeal for money. When they had organised a proper hospital, one should see how the thing ought to be done. Meantime, these volunteer Frenchwomen were doing the best they knew how and doing it now.

A fine-looking young Frenchman who had a shell-wound in the thigh was being lifted onto the table. He shuddered with pain, as he clenched his teeth; yet

when the dressing was finished he was able to breathe his thanks. On the seat was a Congo negro who had been with one of the Belgian regiments, coal black and thick-lipped, with bloodshot eyes; an unsensitised human organism, his face as expressionless as his bare back with holes made by shell-fragments. A young Frenchwoman — she could not have been more than nineteen — with a face of singular refinement, sprayed his wounds with the definiteness of one trained to such work, though two days before it had probably never occurred to her as being in the possibilities of her existence. Her coolness and the coolness of the other women in their silent activity had a charm that went with one's devout respect.

The French wounded, too, were silent, as if in the presence of a crisis which overwhelmed their personal thoughts. Help was needed at the front; they knew it. On sixty trains in one day sixty thousand French passed through Calais. With a pass from the French commandant at Calais, I got aboard one of these trains down at the railroad yards at dawn. This lot were Turcos, in command of a white-haired veteran of African campaigns. An utter change of atmosphere from the freight shed! Perhaps it is only the wounded who have time to think. My companions in the officers' car were as cheery as the brown devils whom they led. They had come from the trenches on the Marne, and their commissariat was a boiled ham, some bread and red wine. Enough! It was war time, as they said.

"We were in the Paris railroad yards. That is all we saw of Paris, and in the night. Hard luck!"

They had left the Marne the previous day. By night they could be in the fight. It did not take long

to send reinforcements when the line was closed to all except military traffic and one train followed close on the heels of another.

They did not know where they were going. One never knew where. Probably they would get orders at Dunkirk. Father Joffre, when there was a call for reinforcements never was in a panicky hurry about it. He seemed to understand that the general who made the call could hold out a little longer; but the reinforcements were always up on time. A long head had Father Joffre.

Now I am going to say that life was going on as usual at Dunkirk; that is the obvious thing to say. The nearer the enemy, the more characteristic that trite observation of those who have followed the roads of war in Europe. At Dunkirk you might have a good meal within sound of the thunder of the guns of the British monitors which were helping the Belgians to hold their line. At Dunkirk most excellent pastry was for sale in a confectionery shop. Why shouldn't tartmakers go on making tarts and selling them? The British naval reserve officers used to take tea in this shop. Little crowds of citizens who had nothing to do, which is the most miserable of vocations in such a crisis, gathered to look at armoured motor cars which had come in from the front with bullet dents, which gave them the atmosphere of battle.

Beyond Dunkirk, one might see wounded Belgians fresh from the front, staggering in, crawling in, hobbling in from under the havoc of shell-fire, their first-aid bandages saturated with mud, their ungainly and impracticable uniforms oozing mud, ghosts of men — these *shipperkes* of the nation that was unprepared for war, who had done their part, when the only military

thought was for more men, unwounded men, British, French, Belgian, to stem the German tide. Yet many of these Belgians, even these, were cheerful. They could still smile and say, *"Bonne chance!"*

Indeed, there seemed no limit to the cheerfulness of Belgians. At a hospital in Calais I met a Belgian professor with his head a white ball of bandages, showing a hole for one eye and a slit for the mouth. He had been one of the cyclist force which took account of many German cavalry scouts in the first two weeks of the war. A staff automobile had run over him on the road.

"I think the driver of the car was careless," he said mildly, as if he were giving a gentle reproof to a student.

By contrast, he had reason to be thankful for his lot. Looked after by a brave man attendant in another room were the wounded who were too horrible to see; who must die. Then in another, you had a picture of a smiling British regular, with a British nurse and an Englishwoman of Calais to look after him. They read to him, they talked to him, they vied with each other in rearranging his pillows or bedclothes. He was a hero of a story; but it rather puzzled him why he should be. Why were a lot of people paying so much attention to him for doing his duty?

In the cavalry, he had been separated from his regiment on the retreat from Mons. Wandering about the country, he came up with a regiment of cuirassiers and asked if he might not fight with them. A number of the cuirassiers spoke English. They took him into the ranks. The regiment went far over on the Marne, through towns with French names which he could not pronounce, this man in khaki with the French troopers.

He was marked. *C'est un Anglais!* People cheered him and threw flowers to him in regions which had never seen one of the soldiers of the Ally before.

Yes, officers and gentlemen invited him to dine, like he was a gentleman, he said, and not a Tommy, and the French Government had given him a decoration called the Legion of Honour or something like that. This was all very fine; but the best thing was that his own colonel, when he returned, had him up before his company and made a speech to him for fighting with the French when he could not find his own regiment. He was supremely happy, this Tommy. In waiting Calais one might witness about all the emotions and contrasts of war — and many which one does not find at the front.

# VII

## IN GERMANY

The other side of the shield — A German guard — A people organised — A machine of psychical force — "A people who think only in the offensive" — A nation trained to win — At a Berlin hotel — Bluffing the nation into confidence — A "normal" city — Officially instilled hate — England the cause — A Red Cross comparison — Everything to win! — "Are you for or against us?" — The German point of view — A hothouse mind trained by a diligent paternalism — The "brand of the *Lusitania*."

NEVER had the war seemed a more monstrous satire than on that first day in Germany as the train took me to Berlin. It was the other side of the wall of gun and rifle-fire, where another set of human beings were giving life in order to take life. The Lord had fashioned them in the same pattern on both sides. Their children were born in the same way; they bled from wounds in the same way — but why go on in this vicious circle of thought? My impressions of Germany were brief and the clearer, perhaps, for being brief and drawn on the fresh background of Paris and Calais waiting to know their fate; of England staring across the Channel in a suspense which her phlegmatic nature would not confess to learn the result of the battle for the Channel ports; of England and France straining with all their strength to hold, while the Germans exerted all theirs to gain, a goal; of Holland, solid mistress of her neutrality, fearing for it and profiting by it while she took in the Belgian foundlings

dropped on her steps — Holland, that little land at peace, with the storms lashing around her.

The stiff and soldierly appearing reserve officer with bristling Kaiserian moustache, so professedly alert and efficient, who looked at the mottled back of my passport and frowned at the recent visa, "*A la Place de Calais, bon pour aller à Dunkerque, P. O. Le Chef d'État Major,*" but let me by without questions or fuss, aroused visions of a frontier stone wall studded with bayonets.

For something about him expressed a certain character of downright militancy lacking in either an English or a French guard. I could imagine his contempt for both and particularly for a "sloppy, undisciplined" American guard, as he would have called one of ours. Personal feelings did not enter into his thoughts. He had none; only national feelings, this outpost of the national organism. The mood of the moment was friendliness to Americans. Germany wished to create the impression on the outside world through the agency of the neutral press that she was in danger of starving, while she amassed munitions for her summer campaign and the Allies were lulled into confidence of siege by famine rather than by arms. A double, a treble purpose the starving campaign served; for it also ensured economy of foodstuffs, while nothing so puts the steel into a soldier's heart as the thought that the enemy is trying to beat him through taking the bread out of his mouth and the mouths of the women and children dependent upon him.

Tears and laughter and moods and passions organised! Seventy million in the union of determined earnestness of a life-and-death issue! Germany had

studied more than how to make war with an army. She had studied how the people at home should help an army to make war.

"With our immense army, which consists of all the able-bodied youth of the people," as a German officer said, "when we go to war the people must all be passionate for war. Their impulse must be the impulse of the army. Their spirit will drive the army on. They must be drilled, too, in their part. No item in national organisation is too small to have its effect."

Compared to the French, who had turned grim and gave their prayers as individuals to hearten their soldiers, the Germans were as responsive as a stringed instrument to the master musician's touch. A whisper in Berlin was enough to set a new wave of passion in motion, which spread to the trenches east and west. Something like the team work of the "rah-rah" of college athletics was applied to the nation. The soft pedal on this emotion, the loud on that, or a new cry inaugurated which all took up, not with the noisy, paid insincerity of a claque, but with the vibrant force of a trained orchestra with the brasses predominant.

There seemed less of the spontaneity of an individualistic people than of the exaltation of a religious revival. If the army were a machine of material force, then the people were a machine of psychical force. Though the thing might leave the observer cold, as a religious revival leaves the sceptic, yet he must admire. I was told that I should succumb to the contagion as others had; but it was not the optimism which was dinned into my ears that affected me as much as side lights.

When Corey and I took a walk away from a railway station where I had to make a train connection, I saw a German reservist of forty-five, who was helping with one hand to thresh the wheat from his farm, on a grey, lowering winter day. The other hand was in a bandage. He had been allowed to go home until he was well enough to fight again. The same sort of scene I had witnessed in France; the wounded man trying to make up to his family the loss of his labour during his absence at the front.

Only, that man in France was on the defensive; he was fighting to hold what he had and on his own soil. The German had been fighting on the enemy's soil to gain more land. He, too, thought of it as the defensive. All Germany insisted that it was on the defensive. But it was the defensive of a people who think only in the offensive. That was it — that was the vital impression of Germany revealed in every conversation and every act.

The Englishman leans back on his oars; the German leans forward. The Englishman's phrase is "stick it," which means to hold what you have; the German's phrase is "onward." It was national youth against national middle age. A vessel with pressure of increase from within was about to expand or burst. A vessel which is large and comfortable for its contents was resisting pressure from without. The French were saying, What if we should lose? and the Germans were saying, What if we should not win all that we are entitled to? Germany had been thinking of a mightier to-morrow and England of a to-morrow as good as to-day. Germany looked forward to a fortune to be won at thirty;

England considered the safeguarding of her fortune at fifty.

It is not professions that count so much as the thing that works out from the nature of a situation and the contemporaneous bent of a people. The English thought of his defence as keeping what he already had; the German was defending what he considered that he was entitled to. If he could make more of Calais than the French, then Calais ought to be his. A nation with the " closed in " culture of the French on one side and the enormous, unwieldy mass of Russia on the other, convinced of its superiority and its ability to beat either foe, thought that it was the friend of peace because it had withheld the blow. When the striking time came, it struck hard and forced the battle on enemy soil, which proved, to its logic, that it was only receiving payment of a debt owed it by destiny.

Bred to win, confident that the German system was the right system of life, it could imagine the German Michael as the missionary of the system, converting the Philistine with machine guns. Confidence, the confidence which must get new vessels for the energy that has overflowed, the confidence of all classes in the realisation of the long-promised day of the " place in the sun " for all the immense population drilled in the system, was the keynote. They knew that they could lick the other fellow and went at him from the start as if they expected to lick him, with a diligence which made the most of their training and preparation.

When I asked for a room with a bath in a leading Berlin hotel, the clerk at the desk said, " I will see, sir." He ran his eye up and down the list methodically before he added: " Yes, we have a good room

on the second floor." Afterward, I learned that all except the first and second floors of the hotel were closed. The small dining-room only was open, and every effort was made to make the small dining-room appear normal.

He was an efficient clerk; the buttons boy who opened the room door, a goose-stepping, alert sprout of German militarism, exhibited a punctiliousness of attention which produced a further effect of normality. Those Germans who were not doing their part at the front were doing it at home by bluffing the other Germans and themselves into confidence. The clerk believed that some day he would have more guests than ever and a bigger hotel. All who suffered from the war could afford to wait. Germany was winning; the programme was being carried out. The Kaiser said so. In proof of it, multitudes of Russian soldiers were tilling the soil in place of Germans, who were at the front taking more Russian soldiers.

Everybody that one met kept telling him that everything was perfectly normal. No intending purchaser of real estate in a boom town was ever treated to more optimistic propaganda. Perfectly normal — when one found only three customers in a large department store! Perfectly normal — when the big steamship offices presented in their windows bare blue seas which had once been charted with the going and coming of German ships! Perfectly normal — when the spool of the killed and wounded rolled out by yards like that of a ticker on a busy day on the Stock Exchange! Perfectly normal — when women tried to smile in the streets with eyes which had plainly been weeping at home! Are you for us or against us? The question was put straight to the stranger. Let him say that he

was a neutral and they took it for granted that he was pro-Ally. He must be pro-something.

As Corey and I returned to the railway station after our walk, a soldier took us in charge and marched us to the office of the military commandant. "Are you an Englishman?" was his first question. The guttural military emphasis which he put on Englishman was most significant. Which brings us to another factor in the psychology of war: hate.

"If men are to fight well," said a German officer, "it is necessary that they hate. They must be exalted by a great passion when they charge into machine guns."

Hate was officially distilled and then instilled — hate against England, almost exclusively. The public rose to that. If England had not come in, the German military plan would have succeeded: first, the crushing of France; then, the crushing of Russia. The despised Belgian, that small boy who had tripped the giant and then hugged the giant's knees, delaying him on the road to Paris, was having a rest. For he had been hated very hard for a while with the hate of contempt — that miserable pigmy who interfered with the plans of the machine.

The French were almost popular. The Kaiser had spoken of them as "brave foes." What quarrel could France and Germany have? France had been the dupe of England. Cartoons of the hairy, barbarous Russian and the futile little Frenchman in his long coat, borne on German bayonets or pecking at the boots of a giant Michael, were not in fashion. For Germany was then trying to arrange a separate peace with both France and Russia. France was to have

Alsace-Lorraine as the price of the arrangement. When the negotiations fell through the cartoonists were free to make sport of the anæmic Gaul and the untutored Slav again. And it was not alone in Germany that a responsive press played the weather vane to Government wishes. But in Germany the machinery ran smoothest.

For the first time I knew what it was to have a human being whom I had never seen before hate me. At sight of me a woman who had been a good Samaritan, with human kindness and charity in her eyes, turned a malignant devil. Stalwart as Minerva she was, a fair-haired German type of about thirty-five, square-shouldered and robustly attractive in her Red Cross uniform. Being hungry at the station at Hanover, I rushed out of the train to get something to eat, and saw some Frankfurter sandwiches on a table in front of me as I alighted.

My hand went out for one, when I was conscious of a movement and an exclamation which was hostile, and looked up to see Minerva, as her hand shot out to arrest the movement of mine, with a blaze of hate, hard, merciless hate, in her eyes, while her lips framed the word, "Englisher!" If looks were daggers I should have been pierced through the heart. Perhaps an English overcoat accounted for her error. Certainly I promptly recognised mine when I saw that this was a Red Cross buffet. An Englishman had dared to try to buy a sandwich meant for German soldiers! She might at least glory in the fact that her majestic glare had made me most uncomfortable as I murmured an apology, which she received with a stony frown.

A moment later a soldier approached the buffet. She leaned over smiling, as gentle as she had been fierce and malignant a moment before, making a picture, as she put some mustard on a sandwich for him, which recalled that of the Frenchwoman among the wounded in the freight shed at Calais — a simile which would anger them both.

The Frenchwoman, too, had a Red Cross uniform; she, too, expressed the mercy and gentle ministration which we like to associate with woman. But there was the difference of the old culture and the new; of the race which was fighting to have and the race which was fighting to hold. The tactics which we call the offensive was in the German woman's, as in every German's, nature. It had been in the Frenchwoman's in Napoleon's time. Many racial hates the war has developed; but that of the German is a seventeen-inch-howitzer-asphyxiating-gas hate.

If hates help to win, why not hate as hard as you can? Don't you go to war to win? There is no use talking of sporting rules and saying that this and that is "not done" in humane circles — win! The Germans meant to win. Always I thought of them as having the spirit of the Middle Ages in their hearts, organised for victory by every modern method. Three strata of civilisation were really fighting, perhaps: The French, with its inherent individual patriotism which makes a Frenchman always a Frenchman, its philosophy which prevents increase of numbers, its thrift and tenacity; the German, with its newborn patriotism, its discovery of what it thinks is the golden system, its fecundity, its aggressiveness, its industry, its ambition; and the Russian, unformed, groping, vague, glamorous, immense.

The American is an outsider to them all; some strange melting-pot product of many races which is trying to forget the prejudices and hates of the old and perhaps not succeeding very well, but not yet convinced that the best means of producing patriotic unity is war. After this and other experiences, after being given a compartment all to myself by men who glanced at me with eyes of hate and passed on to another compartment which was already crowded or stood up in the aisle of the car, I made a point of buying an American flag for my buttonhole.

This helped; but still there was my name, which belonged to an ancestor who had gone from England to Connecticut nearly three hundred years ago. Palmer did not belong to the Germanic tribe. He must be pro- the other side. He could not be a neutral and belong to the human kind with such a name. Only Swenson, or Gansevoort, or Ah Fong could really be a neutral; and even they were expected to be on your side secretly. If they weren't they must be on the other. Are you for us? or, Are you against us? I grew weary of the question in Germany. If I had been for them I would have "dug in" and not told them. In France and England they asked you objectively the state of sentiment in America. But, possibly, the direct, forcible way is the better for war purposes when you mean to win; for the Germans have made a study of war. They are experts in war.

However, this rosy-cheeked German boy, in his green uniform which could not be washed clean of all the stains of campaigning, whom I met in the palace grounds at Charlottenberg, did not put this tiresome question to me. He was the only person I saw in the

grounds, whose quiet I had sought for an hour's respite from war. One could be shown through the palace by the lonely old caretaker, who missed the American tourist, without hearing a guide's monotone explaining who the gentleman in the frame was and what he did and who painted his picture. This boy could have more influence in making me see the German view-point than the propagandist men in the Government offices and the belligerent German-Americans in hotel lobbies — those German-Americans who were so frequently in trouble in other days for disobeying the *verbotens* and then asking our State Department to get them out of it, now pluming themselves over victories won by another type of German.

About twenty-one this boy, round-faced and blue-eyed, who saw in Queen Louisa the most beautiful heroine of all history. The hole in his blouse which the bullet had made was nicely sewed up and his wound had healed. He was fighting in France when he was hit; the name of the place he did not know. Karl, his chum, had been killed. The doctor had given him the bullet, which he exhibited proudly as if it were different from other bullets, as it was to him. In a few days he must return to the front. Perhaps the war would be over soon; he hoped so.

The French were brave; but they hated the Germans and thought that they must make war on the Germans, and they were a cruel people, guilty of many atrocities. So the Fatherland had fought to conquer the enemies who planned her destruction. A peculiar, childlike *naïveté* accompanied his intelligence, trained to run in certain grooves, which is the product of the German type of popular education; that trust in his

superiors which comes from a diligent and efficient paternalism. He knew nothing of the atrocities which Germans were said to have committed in Belgium. The British and the French had set Belgium against Germany and Germany had to strike Belgium for playing false to her treaties. But he did think that the French were brave; only misled by their Government. And the Kaiser? His eyes lighted in a way that suggested that the Kaiser was almost a god to him. He had heard of the things that the British said against the Kaiser and they made him want to fight for his Kaiser. He was only one German — but the one was millions.

In actual learning which comes from schoolbooks, I think that he was better informed than the average Frenchman of his class; but I should say that he had thought less; that his mind was more of a hothouse product of a skilful nurseryman's hand, who knew the value of training and feeding and pruning the plant if you were to make it yield well. A kindly, willing, likable boy, peculiarly simple and unspoiled, it seemed a pity that all his life he should have to bear the brand of the *Lusitania* on his brow; that event which history cannot yet put in its true perspective. Other races will think *Lusitania* when they meet a German long after the Belgian atrocities are forgotten. It will endure to plague a people like the exile of the Acadians, the guillotining of innocents in the French Revolution, and the burning of the Salem witches. But he had nothing to do with it. A German admiral gave an order as a matter of policy to make an impression that his submarine campaign was succeeding and to interfere with the transport of munitions, and the Kaiser told this boy that it was right. One liked

this boy, his loyalty and his courage; liked him as a human being. But one wished that he might think more. Perhaps he will one of these days, if he survives the war.

# VIII

## HOW THE KAISER LEADS

A prisoners' "show" camp — Filthy conditions — Scanty fare — Racial characteristics — "Upholding Britain's dignity" — Russian princes in disguise — A blind artist — A physical insult — Deadly monotony of prison life — Drilling — Hamburg a dead city — A hate of the pocket — The "system" at a Berlin hospital — Effects of the war in Berlin — At the Opera — A plethora of Iron Crosses — Immanence of the Kaiser — Imperial propaganda — The Crown Prince marooned — Glory to the Kaiser and von Hindenburg — President of the German Corporation — Always the offensive — "America too far away!"

ONLY a week before I had seen the wounded Germans in the freight shed at Calais and all the prisoners that I had seen elsewhere, whether in ones or twos, brought in fresh from the front or in columns under escort, had been Germans. The sharpest contrast of all in war which the neutral may observe is seeing the men of one army which, from the other side, he watched march into battle — armed, confident, disciplined parts of an organisation, ready to sweep all before them in a charge — become so many sheep, disarmed, disorganised, rounded up like vagrants in a bread-line and surrounded by a fold of barbed wire and sentries. Such was the lot of the nine thousand British, French, and Russians whom I saw at Döberitz, near Berlin. This was a show camp, I was told, but it suffices. Conditions at others might be worse; doubtless were. England treated its prisoners best, unless my information from unprejudiced observers is wrong. But Germany had enormous numbers of

prisoners. A nation in her frame of mind thought only of the care of the men who could fight for her, not of those who had fought against her.

Then, the German nature is one thing and the British another. Crossing the Atlantic on the *Lusitania* we had a German reserve officer who was already on board when the evening editions arrived at the pier with news that England had declared war on Germany. Naturally, he must become a prisoner upon his arrival at Liverpool. He was a steadfast German. When a wireless report of the German repulse at Liége came, he would not believe it. Germany had the system and Germany would win. But when he said, " I should rather be a German on board a British ship than a Briton on board a German ship, under the circumstances," his remark was significant in more ways than one.

His English fellow-passengers on that splendid liner which a German submarine was to send to the bottom showed him no discourtesy. They passed the time of day with him and seemed to want to make his awkward situation easy. Yet it was apparent that he regarded their kindliness as a racial weakness. *Krieg ist Krieg.* When Germany made war she made war.

So allowances are in order. One prison camp was like another in this sense, that it deprived a man of his liberty. It put him in jail. The British regular, who is a soldier by profession, was, in a way, in a separate class. But the others were men of civil industries and settled homes. Except during their term in the army, they went to the shop or the office every day, or tilled their farms. They were free; they had their work to occupy their minds during the day and freedom of movement when they came home in the evening.

They might read the news by their firesides; they were normal human beings in civilised surroundings.

Here, they were pacing animals in a cage, commanded by two field guns, who might walk up and down and play games and go through the daily drill under their own non-commissioned officers. It was the mental stagnation of the thing that was appalling. Think of such a lot for a man used to action in civil life — and they call war action! Think of a writer, a business man, a lawyer, a doctor, a teacher, reduced to this fenced-in existence, when he had been the kind who got impatient if he had to wait for a train that was late! Shut yourself up in your own backyard with a man with a rifle watching you for twenty-four hours and see whether, if you have the brain of a mouse, prison-camp life can be made comfortable, no matter how many greasy packs of cards you have. And lousy, besides! At times one had to laugh over what Mark Twain called " the damfool human race! "

Inside a cookhouse at one end of the enclosure was a row of soup boilers. Outside were a series of railings, forming stalls for the prisoners when they lined up for meals. In the morning, some oatmeal and coffee; at noon, some cabbage soup boiled with desiccated meal and some bread; at night, more coffee and bread. How one thrived on this fare depended much upon how he liked cabbage soup. The Russians liked it. They were used to it.

" We never keep the waiter late by tarrying over our liqueurs," said a Frenchman.

Our reservist guide had run away to America in youth, where he had worked at anything he could find to do; but he had returned to Berlin, where he had a " good little business " before the war. He was stout

and cheery, and he referred to the prisoners as "boys." The French and Russians were good boys; but the English were bad boys, who had no discipline. He said that all received the same food as German soldiers. It seemed almost ridiculous chivalry that men who had fought against you and were living inactive lives should be as well fed as the men who were fighting for you. The rations that I saw given to German soldiers were better. But that was what the guide said.

"This is our little sitting-room for the English non-commissioned officers," he explained, as he opened the door of a small shanty which had a pane of glass for a window. Some men sitting around a small stove arose. One, a big sergeant-major, towered over the others; he had the colours of the South African campaign on the breast of his worn khaki blouse and stood very straight, as if on parade. By the window was a Scot in kilts, who was equally tall. He looked around over his shoulder and then turned his face away with the pride of a man who does not care to be regarded as a show. His uniform was as neat as if he were at inspection; and the way he held his head, the haughtiness of his profile against the stream of light, recalled the unconquerable spirit of the Prussian prisoner whom I had seen on the road during the fighting along the Aisne. Only a regular, but he was upholding the dignity of Britain in that prison camp better than many a member of Parliament on the floor of the House of Commons. I asked our guide about him.

"A good boy, that! All his boys obey him, and he obeys all the regulations. But he acts as if we Germans were his prisoners."

The British might not be good boys, but they would

be clean. They were diligent in the chase in their underclothes; their tents were free of odour; and there was something resolute about a Tommy who was bare to the waist in that freezing wind, making an effort at a bath. I heard tales of Mr. Atkins' characteristic thoughtlessness. While the French took good care of their clothes and kept their tents neat, he was likely to sell his coat or his blanket if he got a chance in order to buy something that he liked to eat. One Tommy who sat on his stray tick inside the tent was knitting. When I asked him where he had learned to knit, he replied: "India!" and gave me a look as much as to say, "Now pass on to the next cage."

The British looked the most pallid of all, I thought. They were not used to cabbage soup. Their stomachs did not take hold of it, as one said; and they loathed the black bread. No white bread and no jam! Only when you have seen Mr. Atkins with a pot of jam and a loaf of white bread and some bacon frizzling near by can you realise the hardship which cabbage soup meant to that British regular who gets lavish rations of the kind he likes along with his shilling a day for professional soldiering.

"You see, the boys go about as they please," said our guide. "They don't have a bad time. Three meals a day and nothing to do."

Members of a laughing circle which included some British were taking turns at a kind of Russian blind man's buff, which seemed to me about in keeping with the mental capacity of a prison camp.

"No French!" I remarked.

"The French keep to themselves, but they are good boys," he replied. "Maybe it is because we have only a few of them here."

Every time one sounded the subject he was struck by the attitude of the Germans toward the French, not alone explained by the policy of the hour which hoped for a separate peace with France. Perhaps it was best traceable to the Frenchman's sense of *amour propre,* his philosophy, his politeness, or an indefinable quality in the grain of the man.

The Germans affected to look down on the French; yet there was something about the Frenchman which the Germans had to respect — something not won by war. I heard admiration for them at the same time as contempt for their red trousers and their unpreparedness. While we are in this avenue, German officers had respect for the dignity of British officers, the leisurely, easy quality of superiority which they preserved in any circumstances. The qualities of a race come out in adversity no less than in prosperity. Thus, their captors regarded the Russians as big, good-natured children.

"Yes, they play games and we give the English an English newspaper to read twice a week," said our affable guide, unconscious, I think, of any irony in the remark. For the paper was the *Continental News,* published in "the American language" for American visitors. You may take it for granted that it did not exaggerate any success of the Allies.

"We have a prince and the son of a rich man among the Russian prisoners — yes, quite in the Four Hundred," the guide went on. "They were such good boys we put them to work in the cookhouse. Star boarders, eh? They like it. They get more to eat."

These two men were called out for exhibition. Youngsters of the first line they were and even in their

privates' uniforms they bore the unmistakable signs of belonging to the Russian upper class. Each saluted and made his bow, as if he had come on to do a turn before the footlights. It was not the first time they had been paraded before visitors. In the prince's eye I noted a twinkle, which as much as said: "Well, why not? We don't mind."

When we were taken through the cookhouse I asked about a little Frenchman, who was sitting with his nose in a soup bowl. He seemed too near-sighted ever to get into any army. His face was distinctly that of a man of culture; one would have guessed that he was an artist.

"Shrapnel burst," explained the guide. "He will never be able to see much again. We let him come in here to eat."

I wanted to talk with him, but these exhibitions are supposed to be all in pantomime; a question and you are urged along to the next exhibit. He was young and all his life he was to be like that — like some poor, blind kitten!

The last among a number of Russians returning to the enclosure from some fatigue duty was given a blow in the seat of his baggy trousers with a stick which one of the guards carried. The Russian quickened his steps and seemed to think nothing of the incident. But to me it was the worst thing that I saw at Döberitz, this act of physical violence against a man by one who has power over him. The personal equation was inevitable to the observer. Struck in that way, could one fail to strike back? Would not he strike in red anger, without stopping to think of consequences? There is something bred into the Anglo-Saxon nature which resents a physical blow. We courtmartial an

officer for laying hands on a private, though that private may get ten years in prison on his trial. Yet the Russian thought nothing of it, or the guard, either. An officer in the German or the Russian army may strike a man.

"Would the guard hit a Frenchman in that way?" I asked. Our guide said not; the French were good boys. Or an Englishman? He had not seen it done. The Englishman would swear and curse, he was sure, and might fight, they were such undisciplined boys. But the Russians —" they are like kids. It was only a slap. Didn't hurt him any."

New barracks for the prisoners were being built which would be comfortable if crowded, even in winter. The worst thing, I repeat, was the deadly monotony of the confinement for a period which would end only when the war ended. Any labour should be welcome to a healthy-minded man. It was a mercy that the Germans set prisoners to grading roads, to hoeing and harvesting, retrieving thus a little of the wastage of war. Or was it only the bland insistence that conditions were luxurious that one objected to? — not that they were really bad. The Germans had a horde of prisoners to care for; vast armies to maintain; and a new volunteer force of a million or more — two millions was the official report — to train.

While we were at the prison camp we heard at intervals the rap-rap of a machine gun at the practice range near by, drilling to take more prisoners, and on the way back to Berlin we passed on the road companies of volunteers returning from drill with that sturdy march characteristic of German infantry.

In Berlin we were told again that everything was perfectly normal. Trains were running as usual to

Hamburg, if we cared to go there. "As usual" in war time was the ratio of one to five in peace time. At Hamburg, in sight of steamers with cold boilers and the forest of masts of idle ships, one learned what sea power meant. That city of eager shippers and traders, that doorstep of Germany, was as dead as Ypres, without a building being wrecked by shells. Hamburgers tried to make the best of it; they assumed an air of optimism; they still had faith that richer cargoes than ever might come over the sea, while a ghost, that of bankruptcy, walked the streets, looking at office windows and the portholes of the ships.

For one had only to scratch the cuticle of that optimism to find that the corpuscles did not run red. They were blue. Hamburg's citizens had to exhibit the fortitude of those of Rheims under another kind of bombardment: that of the silent guns of British dreadnoughts far out of range. They were good Germans; they meant to play the game; but that once prosperous business man of past middle age, too old to serve, who had little to do but think, found it hard to keep step with the propagandist attitude of Berlin.

A free city, a commercial city, a city unto itself, Hamburg had been in other days a cosmopolitan trader with the rest of the world. It had even been called an English city, owing to the number of English business men there as agents of the immense commerce between England and Germany. Every one who was a clerk or an employer spoke English; and through all the irritation between the two countries which led up to the war, English and German business men kept on the good terms which traffic requires and met at luncheons and dinners and in their clubs. Englishmen were married to German women and Germans

to Englishwomen, while both prayed that their governments would keep the peace.

Now the English husband of the German woman, though he had spent most of his life in Hamburg, though perhaps he had been born in Germany, had been interned and, however large his bank account, was taking his place with his pannikin in the stalls in front of some cookhouse for his ration of cabbage soup. Germans were kind to English friends personally; but when it came to the national feeling of Germany against England, nowhere was it so bitter as in Hamburg. Here the hate was born of more than national sentiment; it was of the pocket; of seeing fortunes that had been laboriously built dwindling, once thriving businesses in suspended animation. There was no moratorium in name; there was worse than one in fact. A patriotic freemasonry in misfortune took its place. No business man could press another for the payment of debts lest he be pressed in turn. What would happen when the war was over? How long would it last?

It was not quite as cruel to give one's opinion as two years to the inquirers in Hamburg as to the director of the great Rudolph Virchow Hospital in Berlin. Here, again, the system; the submergence of the individual in the organisation. The wounded men seemed parts of a machine; the human touch which may lead to disorganisation less in evidence than at home, where the thought is: This is an individual human being, with his own peculiarities of temperament, his own theories of life, his own ego; not just a quantity of brain, tissue, blood, and bone which is required for the organism called man. A human mechanism wounded at the German front needed re-

pairs and the repairs were made to that mechanism. The niceties might be lacking, but the repair factory ran steadily and efficiently at full blast. Germany had to care for her wounded by the millions and by the millions she cared for them.

"Two years!"

I was sorry that I had said this to the director, for its effect on him was like a blow in the chest. The vision of more and more wounded seemed to rise before the eyes of this kindly man weary with the strain of doing the work which he knew so well how to do as a cog in the system. But for only a moment. He stiffened; he became the drillmaster again; and the tragic look in his eyes was succeeded by one of that strange exaltation I had seen in the eyes of so many Germans, which appeared to carry their mind away from you and their surroundings to the battlefield where they were fighting for their "place in the sun."

"Two years, then. We shall see it through!"

He had a son who had been living in a French family near Lille studying French and he had heard nothing of him since the war began. They were good people, this French family; his son liked them. They would be kind to him; but what might not the French Government do to him, a German! He had heard terrible stories — the kind of stories that hardened the fighting spirit of German soldiers — about the treatment German civilians had received in France. He could think of one French family which he knew as being kind, but not of the whole French people as a family. As soon as the national and racial element were considered the enemy became a beast.

To him, at least, Berlin was not normal; nor was it to that keeper of a small shop off Unter den Linden

which sold prints and etchings and cartoons. What a boon my order of cartoons was to him! He forgot his psychology code and turned human and confidential. The war had been hard on him; there was no business at all, not even in cartoons.

The Opera alone seemed something like normal to one who trusted his eyes rather than his ears for information. There was almost a full house for the "Rosenkavalier"; for music is a solace in time of trouble, as other capitals than Berlin revealed. Officers with close-cropped heads wearing Iron Crosses, some with arms in slings, promenading in the refreshment room of the Berlin Opera House between the acts — this in the hour of victory should mean a picture of gaiety. But there was a telling hush about the scene. Possibly music had brought out the truth in men's hearts that war, this kind of war, was not gay or romantic, only murderous and destructive. One had noticed already that the Prussian officer, so conscious of his caste, who had worked so indefatigably to make an efficient army, had become chastened. He had found that common men, butchers and bakers and candlestick makers, could be as brave for their Kaiser as he. And more of these officers had the Iron Cross than not.

The plenitude of Iron Crosses appealed to the risibilities of the superficial observer. But in this, too, there was system. An officer who had been in several battles without winning one must feel a trifle declassed and that it was time for him to make amends to his pride. If many were given to privates then the average soldier would not think the Cross a prize for the few who had luck, but something that he, too, might win by courage and prompt obedience to orders.

The masterful calculation, the splendid pretence and magnificent offence, could not hide the suspense and suffering. Nowhere were you able to forget the war or to escape the all-pervading influence of the Kaiser. The empty royal box at the opera, his opera, called him to mind. What would happen before he reappeared there for a gala performance? When again in the shuffle of European politics would the audience see the Czar of Russia or the King of England by his side?

It was his Berlin, the heart of his Berlin, that was before you when you left the opera — the new Berlin, taking few pages of a guide book compared to Paris, which he had fathered in its boom growth. In front of his palace Russian field guns taken by von Hindenburg at Tannenberg were exhibited as the spoils of his war; while the Never-to-be-Forgotten Grandfather in bronze rode home in triumph from Paris not far away.

One wondered what all the people in the ocean of Berlin flats were thinking as one walked past the statue of Frederick the Great, with his sharp nose pointing the way for future conquerors, and on along Unter den Linden, with its broad pavements gleaming in a characteristic, misty winter night, through the Brandenburg Gate of his Brandenburg dynasty, or to the statue of the blood-and-iron Bismarck, with his strong jaw and pugnacious nose — the statesman militant in uniform with a helmet over his bushy brow — who had made the German Empire, that young empire which had not yet known defeat because of the system which makes ready and chooses the hour for its blow.

Not far away one had glimpses of the white statues

of My Ancestors of the Sièges Allée, or avenue of victory,— the present Kaiser's own idea,— with the great men of the time on their right and left hands. People whose sense of taste, not to say of humour, may limit their statecraft had smiled at this monotonous and grandiose row of all the dead bones of distinguished and mediocre royalty immortalised in marble to the exact number of thirty-two. But they were My Ancestors, O Germans, who made you what you are! Right dress and keep that line of royalty in mind! It is your royal line, older than the trees in the garden, firm as the rocks, Germany itself. The last is not the least in might nor the least advertised in the age of publicity. He is to make the next step in advance for Germany and bring more tribute home, if all Germans will be loyal to him.

One paused to look at the photograph of the Kaiser in a shop window; a big photograph of that man whose photograph is everywhere in Germany. It is a stern face, this face, as the leader wishes his people to see him, with its erectile moustache, the lips firm set, the eyes challenging and the chin held so as to make it symbolic of strength: a face that strives to say in that pose: "Onward! I lead!" Germans have seen it every day for a quarter of a century. They have lived with it and the character of it has grown into their natures.

In the same window was a smaller photograph of the Crown Prince, with his cap rakishly on the side of his head, as if to give himself a distinctive characteristic in the German eye; but his is the face of a man who is not mature for his years and a trifle dissipated. For a while after the war began he, as leader of the

war party, knew the joy of being more popular than the Kaiser. But the tide turned soon in favour of a father, who appeared to be drawn reluctantly into the ordeal of death and wounds for his people in " defence of the Fatherland," and against a son who had clamoured for the horror which his people had begun to realise, particularly as his promised entry into Paris had failed. There can be no question which of the two has the wiser head.

The Crown Prince had passed into the background. He was marooned with ennui in the face of the French trenches in the West, while all the glory was being won in the East. Indeed, father had put son in his place. One day, the gossips said, son might have to ask father, in the name of the Hohenzollerns, to help him recover his popularity. His photograph had been taken down from shop windows and in its place, on the right hand of the Kaiser in the Sièges Allée of contemporary fame, was the bull-dog face of von Hindenburg, victor of Tannenberg. The Kaiser shared von Hindenburg's glory; he has shared the glory of all victorious generals; such is his histrionic gift in the age of the spotlight.

Make no mistake — his people, deluded or not, love him not only because he is Kaiser but also for himself. He is a clever man, who began his career with the enormous capital of being emperor and made the most of his position to amaze the world with a more versatile and also a more inscrutable personality than most people realise. Poseur, perhaps, but an emperor these days may need to be a poseur in order to wear the ermine of Divine Right convincingly to most of his subjects.

His pose is always that of the anointed King of My People. He has never given down on that point, however much he has applied State Socialism to appease the Socialistic agitation. He has personified Germany and German ambition with an adroit egoism and the sentiment of his inheritance. Those critics who see the machinery of the throne may say that he has the mind of a journalist, quick of perception, ready of assimilation, knowing many things in their essentials but no one thing thoroughly. But this is the kind of mind that a ruler requires, plus the craft of the politician.

Is he a good man? Is he a great man? Banal questions! He is the Kaiser on the background of the Sièges Allée, who has first promoted himself, then the Hohenzollerns, and then the interests of Germany with all the zest of the foremost shareholder and president of the corporation. No German in the German hothouse of industry has worked harder than he. He has kept himself up to the mark and tried to keep his people up to the mark. It may be the wrong kind of a mark; but we are not discussing that, and we may beg leave to differ without threshing the old straw of argument.

That young private I met in the grounds at Charlottenberg, that wounded man helping with the harvest, that tired hospital director, the small trader in Hamburg, the sturdy Red Cross woman in the station at Hanover, the peasants and the workers throughout Germany, kept unimaginatively at their tasks, do not see the machinery of the throne, only the man in the photograph who supplies them with a national imagination. His indefatigable goings and comings and his poses fill their minds with a personality which typifies

the national spirit. Will this change after the war? But that, too, is not a subject for speculation here.

Through the war his pose has met the needs of the hour. An emperor bowed down with the weight of his people's sacrifice, a grey, determined emperor hastening to honour the victors, covering up defeats, urging his legions on, himself at the front, never seen by the general public in the rear, a mysterious figure, not saying much and that foolish to the Allies but appealing to the Germans, rather appearing to submerge his own personality in the united patriotism of the struggle — such is the picture which the throne machinery has impressed on the German mind. The histrionic gift may be at its best in creating a saga.

Always the offensive! Germany would keep on striking as long as she had strength for a blow, while making the pretence that she had the strength for still heavier blows. One wonders, should she gain peace by her blows, if the Allies would awaken after the treaty was signed to find how near exhaustion she had been, or that she was so self-contained in her production of war material that she had only borrowed from Hans to pay Fritz, who were both Germans. Russia did not know how nearly she had Japan beaten until after Portsmouth. Japan's method was the German method; she learned it from Germany.

At the end of my journey I was hearing the same din of systematic optimism in my ears as in the beginning.

"Warsaw, then Paris, then our Zeppelins will finish London," said the restaurant keeper on the German side of the Dutch frontier; "and our submarines will settle the British navy before the summer is over. No, the war will not last a year."

"And is America next on the programme?" I asked.

"No. America is too strong; too far away."

I was guilty of a faint suspicion that he was a diplomatist.

# IX

## IN BELGIUM UNDER THE GERMANS

British hospitality to the Belgians — A Dutch refugee camp — The American Commission for relief — Its generals — From Holland to Belgium — A forlorn Landsturm guard — Life in a conquered Land — The overlords in Antwerp — Belgium's hatred — The problem of feeding Belgium — American volunteers — "Some experience" — The conqueror's net — Relics of the former régime.

No week at the front, where war is made, left the mind so full as this week beyond the sound of the guns with war's results. It taught the meaning of the simple words life and death, hunger and food, love and hate. One was in a house with sealed doors, where a family of seven millions sat in silence and idleness, thinking of nothing but war and feeling nothing but war. He had war cold as the fragments of a shrapnel shell beside a dead man on a frozen road; war analysed and docketed for exhibition, without its noise, its distraction, and its hot passion.

In Ostend I had seen the Belgian refugees in flight and I had seen them pouring into London stations, bedraggled outcasts of every class, with the staring uncertainty of the helpless human flock flying from the storm. England, who considered that they had suffered for her sake, opened her purse and her heart to them; she opened her homes, both modest suburban homes and big country houses which are particular about their guests in time of peace. No British family without a Belgian was doing its duty. Bishop's

wife and publican's wife took whatever Belgian was sent to her. The refugee packet arrived without the nature of contents on the address label. All Belgians had become heroic and noble by grace of the defenders of Liége.

Perhaps the bishop's wife received a young woman who smoked cigarettes and asked her hostess for rouge and the publican's wife received a countess. Mrs. Smith of Clapham, who had brought up her children in the strictest propriety, welcomed as playmates for her dears, whom she had kept away from the contaminating associations of the alleys, Belgian children from the toughest quarters of Antwerp, who had a precocity that led to baffling confusion in Mrs. Smith's mind between parental responsibility and patriotic duty. Smart society gave the run of its houses sometimes to gentry who were used to getting the run of that kind of houses by lifting a window with a jimmy on a dark night. It was a refugee lottery. When two hosts met one said: "My Belgian is charming!" and the other said: "Mine isn't. Just listen—" But the English are game; they are loyal; they bore their burden of hospitality bravely.

The strange things that happened were not the more agreeable because of the attitude of some refugees, who when they were getting better fare than they ever had at home, thought that, as they had given their "all" for England, they should be getting still better, not to mention wine on the table in temperance families; while there was a disinclination toward self-support by means of work on the part of certain heroes which promised a Belgian occupation of England that would last as long as the German occupation of Belgium. England was learning that there are Bel-

gians and Belgians. She had received not a few of the " and Belgians."

It was only natural. When the German cruisers bombarded Scarborough and the Hartlepools, the first to the station were not the finest and sturdiest. Those with good bank accounts and a disinclination to take any bodily or gastronomic risks, the young idler who stands on the street corner ogling girls and the girls who are always in the street to be ogled, the flighty-minded, the irresponsible, the tramp, the selfish, and the cowardly are bound to be in the van of flight from any sudden disaster and to make the most of the generous sympathy of those who succour them.

The courageous, the responsible, those with homes and property at stake, those with an inborn sense of real patriotism which means loyalty to locality and to their neighbours, are more inclined to remain with their homes and their property. Besides, a refugee hardly appears at his best. He is in a strange country, forlorn, homesick, a hostage of fate and personal misfortune. The Belgian nation had taken the Allies' side and now all individual Belgians expected the Allies to help them.

England did not get the worst of the refugees. They could travel no farther than Holland, where the Dutch Government appropriated money to care for them at the same time that it was under the expense of keeping its army mobilised. Looking at the refugees in the camp at Bergen op Zoom, an observer might share some of the contempt of the Germans for the Belgians. Crowded in temporary huts in the chill, misty weather of a Dutch winter, they seemed listless, marooned human wreckage. They would not dig ditches to drain their camp; they were given to pil-

fering from one another the clothes which the world's charity supplied. The heart was out of them. They were numbed by disaster.

"Are all these men and women who are living together married?" I asked the Dutch officer in charge.

"It is not for us to inquire," he replied. "Most of them say that they have lost their marriage certificates."

They were from the slums of that polyglot seaport town Antwerp, which Belgians say is anything but real Belgium. To judge Belgium by them is like judging an American town by the worst of its back streets, where saloons and pawnshops are numerous and the red lights twinkle from dark doorways.

Around a table in a Rotterdam hotel one met some generals, who were organising a different kind of campaign from that which brought glory to the generals who conquered Belgium. It was odd that Dr. Rose — that Dr. Rose who had discovered and fought the hook worm among the mountaineers of the Southern States — should be succouring Belgium, and yet only natural. Where else should he and Henry James, Jr., of the Rockefeller Foundation, and Mr. Bicknell, of the American Red Cross, be, if not here directing the use of an endowment fund set aside for just such purposes?

They had been all over Belgium and up into the Northern departments of France occupied by the Germans, investigating conditions. For they were practical men, trained for solving the problem of charity with wisdom, who wanted to know that their money was well spent. They had nothing for the refugees in London, but they found that the people who had stayed at home in Belgium were worthy of help. The

fund was allowing five hundred thousand dollars a month for the American Commission for Relief in Belgium, which was the amount that the Germans had spent in a single day in the destruction of the town of Ypres with shells. Later they were to go to Poland; then to Serbia.

With them was Herbert C. Hoover, a celebrated mining engineer, the head of the Commission. When American tourists were stranded over Europe at the outset of the war, with letters of credit which could not be cashed, their route homeward must lie through London. They must have steamer passage. Hoover took charge. When this work was done and Belgium must be helped, he took charge of a task that could be done only by a neutral. For the adjutants and field officers of his force he turned to American business men in London, to Rhodes scholars at Oxford, and to other volunteers hastening from America.

When Harvard, 1914, who had lent a hand in the American refugees' trials, appeared in Hoover's office to volunteer for the new campaign, Hoover said:

"You are going to Rotterdam to-night."

"So I am!" said Harvard, 1914, and started accordingly. Action and not red tape must prevail in such an organisation.

The Belgians whom I wished to see were those behind the line of guards on the Belgo-Dutch frontier; those who had remained at home under the Germans to face humiliation and hunger. This was possible if you had the right sort of influence and your passport the right sort of visés to accompany a *Besheinigung,* according to the form of "31 Oktober, 1914, Sect. 616, Nr. 1083," signed by the German consul at Rotterdam, which put me in the same auto-

mobile with Harvard, 1914, that stopped one blustery, snowy day of late December before a gate, with Belgium on one side and Holland on the other side of it on the Rosendaal-Antwerp road.

"Once more!" said Harvard, 1914, who had made this journey many times as a despatch rider.

One of the conquerors, the sentry representing the majesty of German authority in Belgium, examined the pass. The conqueror was a good deal larger around the middle than when he was young, but not so large as when he went to war. He had a scarf tied over his ears under a cracked old patent leather helmet, which the Saxon Landsturm must have taken from their garrets when the Kaiser sent the old fellows to keep the Belgians in order, so that the young men could be spared to get rheumatism in the trenches if they escaped death.

You could see that the conqueror missed his wife's cooking and Sunday afternoon in the beer garden with his family. However much he loved the Kaiser, it did not make him love home any the less. His nod admitted us into German-ruled Belgium. He looked so lonely that as our car started I sent him a smile. Surprise broke on his face. Somebody not a German in uniform had actually smiled at him in Belgium! My last glimpse of him was of a grin spreading under the scarf toward his ears.

Belgium was webbed with these old Landsturm guards. If your *Passerschein* was not right, you might survive the first set of sentries and even the second, but the third, and if not the third some succeeding one of the dozens on the way to Brussels, would hale you before a *Kommandatur*. Then you were in trouble. In travelling about Europe I became

so used to passes that when I returned to New York I could not have thought of going to Hoboken without the German consul's visa, or of dining at a French restaurant without the French consul's.

"And again!" said Harvard, 1914, as we came to another sentry. There was good reason why Harvard had his pass in a leather-bound case under a celluloid face. Otherwise, it would soon have been worn out in showing. He had been warned by the Commission not to talk and he did not talk. He was neutrality personified. All he did was to show his pass. He could be silent in three languages. The only time I got anything like partisanship out of him and two sentences in succession was when I mentioned the Harvard-Yale football game.

"My! Wasn't that a smear! In their new stadium, too! Oh, my! Wish I had been there!"

When the car broke a spring halfway to Antwerp, he remarked, "Naturally!" or, rather, a more expressive monosyllable which did not sound neutral.

While he and the Belgian chauffeur, with the help of a Belgian farmer as spectator, were patching up the broken spring, I had a look at the farm. The winter crops were in; the cabbages and Brussels sprouts in the garden were untouched. It happened that the scorching finger of war's destruction had not been laid on this little property. In the yard the wife was doing the week's washing, her hands in hot water and her arms exposed to weather so cold that I felt none too warm in a heavy overcoat. At first sight she gave me a frown, which instantly dissipated into a smile when she saw that I was not German.

If not German, I must be a friend. Yet if I were I would not dare talk — not with German sentries all

about. She lifted her hand from the suds and swung it out to the west toward England and France with an eager, craving fire in her eyes, and then she swept it across in front of her as if she were sweeping a spider off a table. When it stopped at arm's length there was the triumph of hate in her eyes. I thought of the lid of a cauldron raised to let out a burst of steam as she asked: "When?" When? When would the Allies come and turn the Germans out?

She was a kind, hard-working woman, who would help any stranger in trouble the best she knew how. Probably that Saxon whose smile had spread under his scarf had much the same kind of wife. Yet I knew that if the Allies' guns were driving the Germans past her house and her husband had a rifle, he would put a shot in that Saxon's back, or she would pour boiling water on the enemy's head if she could. Then, if the Germans had time, they would burn the farmhouse and kill the husband who had shot one of their comrades.

I recollect a youth who had been in a railroad accident saying: "That was the first time I had ever seen death; the first time I realised what death was." Exactly. You don't know death till you have seen it; you don't know invasion till you have felt it. However wise, however able the conquerors, life under them is a living death. True, the farmer's property was untouched. But his liberty was gone. If you, a well-behaved citizen, have ever been arrested and marched through the streets of your home town by a policeman, how did you like it? Give the policeman a rifle and a fixed bayonet and full cartridge boxes and transform him into a foreigner and the experience would not be any more pleasant.

That farmer could not go to the next town without the permission of the sentries. He could not even mail a letter to his son who was in the trenches with the Allies. The Germans had taken his horse; theirs the power to take anything he had — the power of the bayonet. If he wanted to send his produce to a foreign market, if he wanted to buy food in a foreign market, the British naval blockade closed the sea to him. He was sitting on a chair of steel spikes, hands tied and mouth gagged, while his mind seethed, solacing its hate with hope through the long winter months. If you lived in Kansas and could not get your wheat to Chicago, or any groceries or newspapers from the nearest town, or learn whether your son in Wyoming were alive or dead, or whether the man who owned your mortgage in New York had foreclosed or not — well, that is enough without the German sentry.

Only, instead of newspapers or word about the mortgage, the thing you needed past that blockade was bread to keep you from starving. America opened a window and slipped a loaf into the empty larder. Those Belgian soldiers whom I had seen at Dixmude, wounded, exhausted, mud-caked, shivering, were happy beside the people at home. They were in the fight. It is not the destruction of towns and houses that impresses you most, but the misery expressed by that peasant woman over her washtub.

A writer can make a lot of the burst of a single shell; a photographer showing the ruins of a block of buildings or a church makes it appear that all blocks and all churches are in ruins. Running through Antwerp in a car, one saw few signs of destruction from the bombardment. You will see them if you are specially conducted. Shops were open, the people

were moving about in the streets, which were well lighted. No need of darkness for fear of bombs dropping here! German barracks had safe shelter from aerial raids in a city whose people were the allies of England and France. But at intervals marched the German patrols.

When our car stopped before a restaurant a knot gathered around it. Their faces were like all the other faces I saw in Belgium — unless German — with that restrained, drawn look of passive resistance, persistent even when they smiled. When? When were the Allies coming? Their eyes asked the question which their tongues dared not. Inside the restaurant a score of German officers served by Belgian waiters were dining. Who were our little party? What were we doing there and speaking English — English, the hateful language of the hated enemy? Oh, yes! We were Americans connected with the relief work. But between the officers' stares at the sound of English and the appealing inquiry of the faces in the street lay an abyss of war's fierce suspicion and national policies and racial enmity, which America had to bridge.

Before we could help Belgium, England, blockading Germany to keep her from getting foodstuffs, had to consent. She would consent only if none of the food reached German mouths. Germany had to agree not to requisition any of the food. Some one not German and not British must see to its distribution. Those rigid German military authorities, holding fast to their military secrets, must consent to scores of foreigners moving about Belgium and sending messages across that Belgo-Dutch frontier, which had been closed to all except official German messages. This

called for men whom both the German and the British duellists would trust to succour the human beings crouched and helpless under the circling flashes of their steel.

Fortunately, our Minister to Belgium was Brand Whitlock. He is no Talleyrand or Metternich. If he were, the Belgians might not have been fed, because he might have been suspected of being too much of a diplomatist. When a German, or an Englishman, or a Hottentot, or any other kind of a human being gets to know Whitlock, he recognises that here is an honest man with a big heart. When leading Belgians came to him and said that winter would find Belgium without bread, he turned from the land that has the least food to his own land, which has the most.

For Belgium is a great shop in the midst of a garden. Her towns are so close together that they seem only suburbs of Brussels and Antwerp. She has the densest population in Europe. She raises only enough food to last her for two months of the year. The food for the other ten months she buys with the products of her factories. In 1914–15 Belgium could not send out her products; so we were to help feed her without pay, and England and France were to give money to buy what food we did not give.

But with the British navy generously allowing food to pass the blockade, the problem was far from solved. Ships laden with supplies steaming to Rotterdam — this was a matter of easy organisation. How get the bread to the hungry mouths when the Germans were using all Belgian railroads for military purposes? Germany was not inclined to allow a carload of wheat to keep a carload of soldiers from reaching

the front, or to let food for Belgians keep the men in the trenches from getting theirs regularly. Horse and cart transport would be cumbersome, and the Germans would not permit Belgian teamsters to move about with such freedom. As likely as not they might be spies.

Anybody who can walk or ride may be a spy. Therefore, the way to stop spying is not to let any one walk or ride. Besides, Germany had requisitioned most of the horses that could do more than draw an empty phaeton on a level. But she had not drawn the water out of the canals; though the Belgians, always whispering jokes at the expense of the conquerors, said that the canals might have been emptied if their contents had been beer. There were plenty of idle boats in Holland, whose canals connect with the web of canals in Belgium. You had only to seal the cargoes against requisition, the seal to be broken only by a representative of the Relief Commission, and start them to their destination.

And how make sure that only those who had money should pay for their bread, while all who had not should be reached? The solution was simple compared to the distribution of relief after the San Francisco earthquake and fire, for example, in our own land, where a scantier population makes social organisation comparatively loose.

The people to be relieved were in their homes. Belgium is so old a country, her population so dense, and she is so much like one big workshop, that the Government must keep a complete set of books. Every Belgian is registered and docketed. You know just how he makes his living and where he lives. Upon marriage a Belgian gets a little book, giving his

name and his wife's, their ages, their occupations, and address. As children are born their names are added. A Belgian holds as fast to this book as a woman to a piece of jewellery that is an heirloom.

With few exceptions, Belgian local officials had not fled the country. They realised that this was a time when they were particularly needed on the job to protect the people from German exactions and from their own rashness. There were also any number of volunteers. The thing was to get the food to them and let them organise local distribution.

The small force of Americans required to oversee the transit must both watch that the Germans did not take any of the food and retain both British and German confidence in the absolute good faith of their intentions. The volunteers got their expenses and the rest of their reward was experience; and it was "some experience" as a Belgian said, who was learning a little American slang. They talked about canal-boat cargoes as if they had been from Buffalo to Albany on the Erie Canal for years; they spoke of "my province" and compared bread lines and the efficiency of local officials. And the Germans took none of the food; orders from Berlin were obeyed. Berlin knew that any requisitioning of relief supplies meant that the Relief Commission would cease work and announce to the world the reason.

However many times the Americans were arrested they must be patient. That exception who said, when he was put in a cell overnight because he entered the military zone by mistake, that he would not have been treated that way in England, needed a little more coaching in preserving his mask of neutrality. For I must say that nine out of ten of these young men,

leaning over backward to be neutral, were pro-Ally, including some with German names. But publicly you could hardly get an admission out of them that there was any war. As for Harvard, 1914, hand a passport carried around the Sphinx's neck and you have him done in stone.

Fancy any Belgian trying to get him to carry a contraband letter or a German commander trying to work him for a few sacks of flour! When I asked him what career he had chosen he said, "Business!" without any waste of words. I think that he will succeed in a way to surprise his family. It is he and all those young Americans of which he is a type, as distinctive of America in manner, looks, and thought as a Frenchman is of France or a German of Germany, who carried the torch of Peace's kindly work into war-ridden Belgium. They made you want to tickle the eagle on the throat so he would let out a gentle, well-modulated scream, of course, strictly in keeping with neutrality.

Red lanterns took the place of red flags swung by Landsturm sentries on the run to Brussels as darkness fell. There was no relaxation of watchfulness at night. All the twenty-four hours the systematic conquerors held the net tight. Once when my companion repeated his "Again!" and held out the pass in the lantern's rays, I broke into a laugh, which excited his curiosity, for you soon get out of the habit of laughing in Belgium.

"It has just occurred to me that my guidebook states that passports are not required in Belgium!" I explained.

The editor of that guidebook will have a busy time before he issues the next edition. For example, he

will have a lot of new information about Malines, whose ruins were revealed by the motor lamps in shadowy, broken walls on either side of the main street. Other places where less damage had been done were equally silent. In the smaller towns and villages the population must keep indoors at night; for egress and ingress are more difficult to control there than in large cities, where guards at every corner suffice — watching, watching, these disciplined pawns of remorselessly efficient militarism; watching every human being in Belgium.

"The last time I saw that statue of Liége," I remarked, peering into the darkness as we rode into the city, "the Legion of Honour conferred by France on Liége for its brave defence was hung on its breast. I suppose it is gone now."

"I guess yes," said Harvard, 1914.

We went to the hotel at Brussels which I had left the day before the city's fall. English railway signs on the walls of the corridor had not been disturbed. More ancient relic still seemed a bulletin board with its announcement of seven passages a day to England, traversing the Channel in "fifty-five minutes *via* Calais" and "three hours *via* Ostend," with the space blank where the state of the weather for the despair or the delight of intending voyagers had been chalked up in happier days. The same men were in attendance at the office as before; but they seemed older and their politeness that of cheerless automatons. For five months they had been serving German officers as guests with hate in their hearts and, in turn, trying to protect their property.

A story is told of how that hotel had filled with officers after the arrival of the Germanic flood and

how one day, when it was learned that the proprietor was a Frenchman, guards were suddenly placed at the doors and the hall was filled with baggage as every officer, acting with characteristic official solidarity, vacated his room and bestowed his presence elsewhere. Then the proprietor was informed that his guests would return if he would agree to employ German help and buy his supplies from Germany. He refused, for practical as well as for sentimental reasons. If he had consented, think what the Belgians would have done to him after the Germans were gone! However, officers were gradually returning, for this was the best hotel in town, and even conquerors are human and German conquerors have particularly human stomachs.

# X

## CHRISTMAS IN BELGIUM

"A man's house is his castle" worth fighting for — Breakfast in a Belgian hotel — Groups of the conquerors — "News" in Belgium — Companionship at mass — Business at a standstill — A Belgian bread line — Workers and no work — Methods of relief distribution — German surveillance — Dinner at the American legation — "When would the Allies come?"

CHRISTMAS in Belgium with the bayonet and the wolf at the door taught one to value Christmas at home for more than its gifts and the cheer of the fireside. It taught him what it meant to belong to a free people and how precious is that old England saying that a man's house is his castle, which was the inception of so much in our lives that we accept as a commonplace. If such a commonplace can be made secure only by fighting, then it is best to fight. At any time a foreign soldier might enter the house of a Belgian and take him away for trial before a military court.

Breakfast in the same restaurant as before the city's fall! Again the big grapes which are a luxury of the rich man's table or an extravagance for a sick friend with us! The hothouses still grew them. What else was there for the hothouses to do, though the export of their products was impossible? A shortage of the long, white-leafed chicory that we call endive in New York restaurants! There were piles of it in the Brussels market and on the hucksters' carts; nothing so cheap. One might have excellent steaks and roasts and delicious veal; for the heifers were be-

ing butchered, as the Germans had taken all fodder. But the bread was the Commission's brown, which every one had to eat. Belgium, growing quality on scanty acres with intensive farming, had food luxuries but not the staff of life.

One looked out of the windows on to the square which four months before he had seen crowded with people bedecked with the Allies' colours and eagerly buying the latest editions containing the *communiqués* of hollow optimism. No flag in sight now except a German flag flying over the station! But small revenges may be enjoyed. A German soldier tried to jump on the tail of a cart driven by a Belgian; but the Belgian whipped up his horse and the German fell off onto the pavement, while the cart sped around a corner.

Out of the station came a score of German soldiers returning from the trenches, on their way to barracks to regain strength so that they could bear the ordeal of standing in icy water again. They were not the kind exhibited on press tours to illustrate the " vigour of our indomitable army." Eyelids drooped over hollow eye-sockets; sore, numbed feet moved like feet which are asleep in their vain effort to keep step. Sensitiveness to surroundings, almost to existence, seemed to have been lost.

One was a corporal, young, tall, and full-bearded. He might have been handsome if he had not been so haggard. He gave the lead to the others; he seemed to know where they were going, and they shuffled on after him in dogged painfulness. Four months ago that corporal, with the spring of the energy of youth when the war was young, was perhaps in the green column that went through the streets of Brussels in the

thunderous beat of their regular tread on the way to Paris. The group was an object lesson in how much the victor must suffer in war in order to make his victim suffer.

Some officers were at breakfast, too. Mostly they were reservists; mostly bespectacled, with middle age swelling their girth and hollowing their chests, but sturdy enough to apply the regulations made for conduct of the conquered. While stronger men were under shell-fire at the front, they were under the fire of Belgian hate as relentless as their own hate of England. You saw them always in the good restaurants, but never in the company of Belgians, these ostracised rulers. In four months they had made no friends; at least, no friends who would appear with them in public. A few thousand guards in Belgium in the companionship of conquest and seven million Belgians in the companionship of a common helplessness! Bayonets may make a man silent, but they cannot stop his thinking.

At the breakfast table on that Christmas morning in London, Paris, or Berlin the patriot could find the kind of news that he liked. His racial and national predilections and animosities were solaced. If there were good news it was "played up"; if there were bad news, it was not published, or it was explained. *L'Écho Belge* and *L'Indépendence Belge,* and all the Brussels papers were either out of business or being issued as single sheets in Holland and England.

The Belgian, keenest of all the peoples at war for news, having less occupation to keep his mind off the war, must read the newspapers established under German auspices, which fed him with the pabulum that German *chefs* provided, reflective of the stumbling de-

generacy of England, French weariness of the war, Russian clumsiness, and the invincibility of Germany. If an Englishman had to read German, or a German English, newspapers every morning he might have understood how the Belgian felt.

Those who had sons or fathers or husbands in the Belgian army could not send or receive letters, let alone presents. Families scattered in different parts of Belgium could not hold reunions. But at mass I saw a Belgian standard in the centre of the church. That flag was proscribed, but the priests knew it was safe in that sacred place and the worshippers might feast their eyes on it as they said their *aves*.

A Bavarian soldier came in softly and stood a little apart from others, many in mourning, at the rear, a man who was of the same faith as the Belgians and who crossed himself with the others in the house of brotherly love. He would go outside to obey orders; and the others to nurse their hate of him and his race. This private in his faded green, bowing his head before that flag in the shadows of the nave, was war-sick, as most soldiers were; and the Belgians were heartsick. They had the one solace in common. But if you had suggested to him to give up Belgium, his answer would have been that of the other Germans: "Not after all we have suffered to take it!" Christians have a peculiar way of applying Christianity. Yet if it were not for Christianity and that infernal thing called the world's opinion, which did not exist in the days of Cæsar and the Belgii, the Belgians might have been worse off than they were. More of them might have been dead. When they were saying, "Give us this day our daily bread" they were

thinking, " An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," if ever their turn came.

A satirist might have repeated the apocryphal *naïveté* of Marie Antoinette, who asked why the people wanted bread when they could buy such nice cakes for a sou. For all the *patisseries* were open. Brussels is famous for its French pastry. With a store of preserves, why shouldn't the bakeshops go on making tarts with heavy crusts of the brown flour, when war had not robbed the bakers of their art? It gave work to them; it helped the shops to keep open and make a show of normality. But I noticed that they were doing little business. Stocks were small and bravely displayed. Only the rich could afford such luxuries, which in ordinary times were what ice cream cones are to us. Even the jewellery shops were open, with diamond rings flashing in the windows.

" You must pay rent; you don't want to discharge your employees," said a jeweller. " There is no place to go except your shop. If you closed it would look as if you were afraid of the Germans. It would make you blue and the people in the street blue. One tries to go through the motions of normal existence, anyway. But, of course, you don't sell anything. This week I have repaired a locket which carried the portrait of a soldier at the front and I've put a mainspring in a watch. I'll warrant that is more than some of my competitors have done."

Swing around the circle in Brussels of a winter's morning and look at the only crowds that the Germans allow to gather, and any doubt that Belgium would have gone hungry if she had not received provisions from the outside was dispelled. Whenever I think of

a bread line again I shall see the faces of a Belgian bread line. They blot out the memory of those at home, where men are free to go and come; where war has not robbed the thrifty of food.

It was fitting that the great central soup kitchen should be established in the central express office of the city. For in Belgium these days there is no express business except in German troops to the front and wounded to the rear. The despatch of parcels is stopped, no less than the other channels of trade, in a country where trade was so rife, a country that lived by trade. On the stone floor, where once packages were arranged for forwarding to the towns whose names are on the walls, were many great cauldrons in clusters of three, to economise space and fuel.

"We don't lack cooks," said a *chef,* who had been in a leading hotel. "So many of us are out of work. Our society of hotel and restaurant keepers took charge. We know the practical side of the business. I suppose you have the same kind of a society in New York and would turn to it for help if the Germans occupied New York."

He gave me a printed report in which I read, for example, that "M. Arndt, professor of the École Normale, had been good enough to take charge of accounts," and "M. Catteau had been specially appointed to look after the distribution of bread."

Most appetising that soup prepared under direction of the best *chefs* in the city. The meat and green vegetables in it were Belgian and the peas American. Steaming hot in big cans it was sent to the communal centres, where lines of people with pots, pitchers, and pails waited to receive their daily allowance. A democracy was in that bread line such as I have never

seen anywhere except at San Francisco after the earthquake. Each person had a blue or a yellow ticket, with numbers to be punched, like a commuter. The blue tickets were for those who had proved to the communal authorities that they could not pay; the yellow for those who paid five centimes for each person served. A flutter of blue and yellow tickets all over Belgium, and in return life! With each serving of soup went a loaf of the American brown bread. The faces in the line were not those of people starving — they had been saved from starvation. There was none of the emaciation which pictures of famine in the Orient have made familiar; but they were pinched faces, bloodless faces, the faces of people on short rations.

To the Belgian bread is not only the staff of life; it is the legs. At home we think of bread as something that goes with the rest of the meal; to the poorer classes of Belgians the rest of the meal is something that goes with bread. To you and me food has meant the payment of money to the baker and the butcher and the grocer, or the hotelkeeper. You get your money by work or from investments. What if there were no bread to be had for work or money? Sitting on a mountain of gold in the desert of Sahara would not quench thirst.

Three hundred grams, a minimum calculation — about half what the British soldier gets — was the ration. That small boy sent by his mother got five loaves; his ticket called for an allowance for a family of five. An old woman got one loaf, for she was alone in the world. Each one as he hurried by had a personal story of what war had meant to him. They answered your questions frankly, gladly, with the

Belgian cheerfulness which was amazing considering the circumstances. A tall, distinguished-looking man was an artist.

"No work for artists these days," he said.

No work in a community of workers where every link of the chain of economic life had been broken. No work for the next man, a chauffeur, or the next, a brass worker; the next, a teamster; the next, a bank clerk; the next, a doorkeeper of a Government office; while the wives of those who still had work were buying in the only market they had. But the husbands of some were not at home. Each answer about the absent one had an appeal that nothing can picture better than the simple words or the looks that accompanied the words.

"The last I heard of my husband he was fighting at Dixmude — two months ago."

"Mine is wounded, somewhere in France."

"Mine was with the army, too. I don't know whether he is alive or dead. I have not heard since Brussels was taken. He cannot get my letters and I cannot get his."

"Mine was killed at Liége, but we have a son."

So you out in Nebraska who gave a handful of wheat might know that said handful of wheat reached its destination in an empty stomach. If you sent a suit of clothes or a cap or a pair of socks, come along to the skating-rink, where ice polo was played and matches and carnivals were held in better days, and look on at the boxes, packed tight with gifts of every manner of thing that men and women and children wear except silk hats, which are being opened and sorted and distributed into hastily constructed cribs and compartments.

A Belgian woman whose father was one of Belgium's leading lawyers — her husband was at the front — was the busy head of this organisation, because, as she said, the busier she was the more it "keeps my mind off —" and she did not finish the sentence. How many times I heard that "keeps my mind off —" a sentence that was the more telling for not being finished. She and some other women began sewing and patching and collecting garments; "but our business grew so fast"— the business of relief is the one kind in Belgium that does grow these days — "that now we have hundreds of helpers. I begin to feel that I am what you would call in America a captainess of industry."

Some of the good mothers in America were a little too thoughtful in their kindness. An odour in a box that had evidently travelled across the Atlantic close to the ship's boilers was traced to the pocket of a boy's suit, which contained the hardly distinguishable remains of a ham sandwich, meant to be ready to hand for the hungry Belgian boy who got that suit. Broken pots of jam were quite frequent. But no matter. Soap and water and Belgian industry saved the suit, if not the sandwich. Sweaters and underclothes and overcoats almost new and shiny, old frock coats and trousers with holes in seat and knees might represent equal sacrifice on the part of some American three thousand miles away, and all were welcome. Needlewomen were given work cutting up the worn-outs of grown-ups and making them over into astonishingly good suits or dresses for youngsters.

"We've really turned the rink into a kind of department store," said the lady. "Come into our boot department. We had some leather left in Belgium

that the Germans did not requisition, so we bought it and that gave more Belgians work in the shoe factories. Work, you see, is what we want to keep our minds off —"

Blue and yellow tickets here, too! Boots for children and thick-set working women and watery-eyed old men! And each was required to leave behind the pair he was wearing.

"Sometimes we can patch up the cast-offs, which means work for the cobblers," said the captainess of industry. "And who are our clerks? Why, the people who put on the skates for the patrons of the rink, of course!"

One could write volumes on this systematic relief work, the businesslike industry of succouring Belgium by the businesslike Belgians, with American help. Certainly one cannot leave out those old men stragglers from Louvain and Bruges and Ghent — venerable children with no offspring to give them paternal care — who took their turn in getting bread, which they soaked thoroughly in their soup for reasons that would be no military secret, not even in the military zone. On Christmas Day an American, himself a smoker, thinking what class of children he could make happiest on a limited purse, remembered the ring around the stove and bought a basket of cheap briar pipes and tobacco. By Christmas night some toothless gums were sore, but a beatific smile of satiation played in white beards.

Nor can one leave out the very young babies at home, who get their milk if grown people don't, and the older babies beyond milk but not yet old enough for bread and meat, whose mothers return from the bread line to bring their children to another line, where

they got portions of a sirupy mixture which those who know say is the right provender. On such occasions men are quite helpless. They can only look on with a frog in the throat at pale, improperly nourished mothers with bundles of potential manhood and womanhood in their arms. For this was woman's work for woman. Belgian women of every class joined in it: the competent wife of a workman, or the wife of a millionaire who had to walk like everybody else now that her automobile was requisitioned by the army.

Pop-eyed children, ruddy-cheeked, aggressive children, pinched-faced children, kept warm by sweaters that some American or English children spared, happy in that they did not know what their elders knew! Not the danger of physical starvation so much as the actual presence of mental starvation was the thing that got on our nerves in a land where the sun is seldom seen in winter and rainy days are the rule. It was bad enough in the " zone of occupation," so called, a line running from Antwerp past Brussels to Mons. One could guess what it was like in the military zone to the westward, where only an occasional American relief representative might go.

This is not saying that the Germans were stricter than necessary, if we excuse the exasperation of their militarism, in order to prevent information from passing out when a multitude of Belgians would have risked their lives gladly to help the Allies. One spy bringing accurate information might cost the German army thousands of casualties; perhaps decide the fate of a campaign. They saw the Belgians as enemies. They were fighting to take the lives of their enemies and save their own lives, which made it tough for them and for

the French and the British — tough all round, but very particularly tough for Belgians.

It was good for a vagrant American to dine at the American Legation, where Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock were far, very far, from the days in Toledo, Ohio, where he was mayor. Some said that the place of the Minister to Belgium was at Havre, where the Belgian Government had its offices; but neither Whitlock nor the Belgian people thought so, nor the German Government, of late, since they had realised his prestige with the Belgians and how they would listen to him in any crisis when their passions might break the bonds of wisdom. Hugh Gibson, being the omnipresent Secretary of Legation in four languages, naturally was also present. We recalled dining together in Honduras, when he was in the thick of vexations.

Trouble accommodatingly waits for him wherever he goes, because he has a gift for taking care of trouble, in the ascendency of a cheerful spirit and much knowledge of international law. His present for the Minister who daily received stacks of letters from all sources asking the impossible, as well as from Americans who wanted to be sure that the food they gave was not being purloined by the Germans, was a rubber stamp, " Blame-it-all — there's-a-state-of-war-in-Belgium ! " which he suggested might save typewriting — a recommendation which the Minister refused to accept, not to Gibson's surprise.

On that Christmas afternoon and evening, the people promenaded the streets as usual. You might have thought it a characteristic Christmas afternoon or evening except for the Landsturm patrols. But there was an absence of the old gaiety, and they were

moving as if from habit and moving was all there was to do.

They had heard the sound of the guns at Dixmude the night before. Didn't the sound seem a little nearer? No. The wind from that direction was stronger. When? When would the Allies come?

# XI

## THE FUTURE OF BELGIUM

A buffer state divided in itself — Her ideals those of prosperity — False sentiment regarding the Belgians — Not a war-like people — Moral force of her plutocracy — Ruins exaggerated — German policy of destruction — "Mass" logic — A military occupancy, merciless and crafty — "Reprisals" of the Belgians — Louvain — The bread line at Liége — Politics and German propaganda — Her Belgian policy worthy of England at her best — England still true to her ideals.

In former days the traveller hardly thought of Belgium as possessing patriotic homogeneity. It was a land of two languages, French and Flemish. He was puzzled to meet people who looked like well-to-do mechanics, artisans, or peasants and find that they could not answer a simple question in French. This explained why a people so close to France, though they made Brussels a little Paris, would not join the French family and enter into the spirit and body of that great civilisation on their borders, whose language was that of their own literature. Belgium seemed to have no character. Its nationality was the artificial product of European politics; a buffer divided in itself, which would be neither French nor German nor definitely Belgian.

In later times Belgium had prospered enormously. It had developed the resources of the Congo in a way that had aroused a storm of criticism. Old King Leopold made the most of his neutral position to gain advantages which no one of the great powers might enjoy

because of jealousies. The International Sleeping-Car Company was Belgian and Belgian capitalists secured concessions here and there, wherever the small tradesman might slip into openings suitable to his size. Leopold was not above crumbs; he made them profitable. Leopold liked to make money and Belgium liked to make money.

Her defence guaranteed by neutrality, Belgium need have no thought except of thrift. Her ideals were those of prosperity. No ambition of national expansion stirred her imagination as Germay's was stirred; there was no fire in her soul as in that of France in apprehension of the day when she should have to fight for her life against Germany; no national cause to harden the sinews of patriotism. The immensity of her urban population contributed its effect in depriving her of the sterner stuff of which warriors are made. Success meant more comforts and luxuries. In towns like Brussels and Antwerp this doubtless had its effect on the moralities, which were hardly of the New England Puritan standard. She had a small standing army; a militia system in the process of reform against the conviction of the majority, unlike that of the Swiss mountaineers, that Belgium would never have any need for soldiers.

If militarism means conscription as it exists in France and Germany, then militarism has improved the physique of races in an age when people are leaving the land for the factory. The prospect of battle's test unquestionably developed certain sturdy qualities in a people which can and ought to be developed in some other way than with the prospect of spending money for shells to kill other people.

With the world making every Belgian man a hero

and the unknowing convinced that a citizen soldiery at Liége — defended by the Belgian standing army — had rushed from their homes with rifles and beaten German infantry, it is right to repeat that the *shipperke* spirit was not universal, that at no time had Belgium more than a hundred and fifty thousand men under arms, and that on the Dixmude line she maintained never more than eighty thousand men out of a population of seven millions, which should yield from seven hundred thousand to a million; while they lost a good deal of sympathy both in England and in France through the number of able-bodied refugees who were disinclined to serve. It was a mistaken idealism that swept over the world early in the war, characterising a whole nation with the gallantry of its young king and his little army.

The spirit of the Boers or of the Minute Men at Lexington was not in the Belgian people. It could not be from their very situation and method of life. They did not believe in war; they did not expect to practice war; but war came to them out of the still blue heavens, as it came to the prosperous Incas of Peru.

Where one was wrong was in his expectation that her bankers and capitalists — an aristocracy of money not given to the simple life — and her manufacturers, artisans, and traders, if not her peasants, would soon make truce with Cæsar for individual profit. Therein, Belgium showed that she was not lacking in the moral spirit which, with the *shipperke's,* became a fighting spirit. It seemed as if the metal of many Belgians, struck to a white heat in the furnace of war, had cooled under German occupation to the tempered steel of a new nationalism.

When you travelled over Belgium after it was pacified, the logic of German methods became clear. What was haphazard in their reign of terror was due to the inevitable excesses of a soldiery taking the calculated redress ordered by superiors as licence in the first red passion of war to a war-mad nation, which was sullen because the Belgians had not given up the keys of the gate to France.

The extent of the ruins in Belgium east of the Yser has been exaggerated. They were the first ruins, most photographed, most advertised; bad enough, inexcusable enough, and warrantedly causing a spell of horror throughout the civilised world. We have heard all about them, mind, while hearing nothing about those in Lorraine, where the Bavarians exceeded Prussian ruthlessness in reprisals. I mean, that to have read the newspapers in early September, 1914, one would have thought that half the towns of Belgium were *débris*, while the truth is that only a small percentage are — those in the path of the German army's advance. Two-thirds of Louvain itself is unharmed; though the fact alone of its venerable library being in ashes is sufficient outrage, if not another building had been harmed.

The German army planned destruction with all the regularity that it billeted troops, or requisitioned supplies, or laid war indemnities. It did not destroy by shells exclusively. It deliberately burned homes. No matter whether the owners were innocent or not, the homes were burned as an example. The principle applied was that of punishing half a dozen or all the boys in the class in the hope of getting the real culprit.

Cold ruins mark blocks where sniping was thought

to have occurred. The Germans insist that theirs was the merciful way. *Krieg ist Krieg.* When a hundred citizens of Louvain were gathered and shot because they were the first citizens of Louvain to hand, the purpose was security of the mass at the expense of the individual, according to the war-is-war machine reasoning. No doubt there was firing on German troops by civilians. What did the Germans expect after the way that they had invaded Belgium? If they had bothered with trials and investigations, the conquerors say, sniping would have kept up. They may have taken innocent lives and burned the homes of the innocent, they admit; but their defence is that thereby they saved many thousands of their soldiers and of Belgians, and prevented the feud between the rulers and the ruled from becoming more embittered.

Sniping over, the next step in policy was to keep the population quiet with the minimum of soldiery, which would permit a maximum at the front. In a thickly-settled country, so easily policed, in a land with the population inured to peace, the wisdom of keeping quiet was soon evident to the people. What if Boers had been in the Belgians' place? Would they have attempted guerrilla warfare? Would you or I want to bring destruction on neighbours in a land without any rural fastnesses as a *rendezvous* for operations? One could tell only if a section of our country were invaded.

A burned block costs less than a dead German soldier. The system was efficacious. It was mercilessness mixed with craft. When Prussian brusqueness was found to be unnecessarily irritating to the population, causing rash Belgians to turn desperate, the elders of the Saxon and Bavarian co-religionists were

called in. They were amiable fathers of families, who would obey orders without taking the law into their own hands. The occupation was strictly military. It concerned itself with the business of national suffocation. All the functions of the national Government were in German hands. But Belgian policemen guided the street traffic, arrested culprits for ordinary misdemeanours, and took them before Belgian judges. This concession, which also meant a saving in soldiers, only aggravated to the Belgian the regulations directed against his personal freedom.

"Eat, drink, and live as usual. Go to your own police courts for misdemeanours," was the German edict in a word; "but remember that ours is the military power, and no act that aids the enemy, that helps the cause of Belgium in this war, is permitted. Observe that particular *affiche* about a spy, please. He was shot."

At every opportunity the Belgians were told that the British and the French could never come to their rescue. The Allies were beaten. It was the British who got Belgium into trouble; the British who were responsible for the idleness, the penury, the hunger, and the suffering in Belgium. The British had used Belgium as a cat's-paw; then they had deserted her. But Belgians remained mostly unconvinced. They were making war with mind and spirit, if not with arms.

"We know how to suffer in Belgium," said a Belgian jurist. "Our ability to suffer and to hold fast to our hearths has kept us going through the centuries. Flemish and French, we have stubbornness in common. Now a ruffian has come into our house and taken us by the throat. He can choke us to death, or

he can slowly starve us to death, but he cannot make us yield. No, we shall never forgive!"

"You, too, hate, then?" I asked.

"Of course I hate. For the first time in my life I know what it is to hate; and so do my countrymen. I begin to enjoy my hate. It is one of the privileges of our present existence. We cannot stand on chairs and tables as they do in Berlin cafés and sing our hate, but no one can stop our hating in secret."

Beside the latest *verboten* and regulation of Belgian conduct on the city walls were posted German official news bulletins. The Belgians stopped to read; they paused to reread. And these were the rare occasions when they smiled, and they liked to have a German sentry see that smile.

"*Pour les enfants!*" they whispered, as if talking to one another about a *crèche*. Little ones, be good! Here is a new fairy tale!

When a German wanted to buy something he got frigid politeness and attention — very frigid, telling politeness — from the clerk, which said:

"Beast! Invader! I do not ask you to buy, but as you ask, I sell; and as I sell I hate! I hate!! I hate!!!"

An officer entering a shop and seeing a picture of King Albert on the wall, said:

"The orders are to take that down!"

"But don't you love your Kaiser?" asked the woman, who kept the shop.

"Certainly!"

"And I love my King!" was the answer. "I like to look at his picture just as much as you like to look at your Kaiser's."

"I had not thought of it in that way!" said the officer.

Indeed, it is very hard for any conqueror to think of it in that way. So the picture remained on the wall.

How many soldiers would it take to enforce the regulation that no Belgian was to wear the Belgian colours? Imagine thousands and thousands of Landsturm men moving about and plucking King Albert's face or the black, yellow and red from Belgian buttonholes! No sooner would a buttonhole be cleared in front than the emblem would appear in a buttonhole in the rear. The Landsturm would face counter, flank, frontal, and rear attacks in a most amusing military manœuvre, which would put those middle-aged conquerors fearfully out of breath and be rare sport for the Belgians. You could not arrest the whole population and lead them off to jail; and if you bayoneted a few — which really those phlegmatic, comfortable old Landsturms would not have the heart to do for such a little thing — why, it would get into the American press and the Berlin Foreign Office would say:

"There you are, you soldiers, breaking all the crockery again!"

In the smaller towns, where the Germans were billeted in Belgian houses, of course the hosts had to serve their unwelcome guests.

"Yet we managed to let them know what was in our hearts," said one woman. "Some tried to be friendly. They said they had wives and children at home; and we said: 'How glad your wives and children would be to see you! Why don't you go home?'"

When a report reached the commander in Ghent

that an old man had concealed arms, a sergeant with a guard was sent to search the house.

"Yes, my son has a rifle."

"Where is it?"

"In his hands on the Yser, if he is not dead, monsieur. You are welcome to search, monsieur."

Belgium was developing a new humour: a humour at the expense of the Germans. In their homes they mimicked their rulers as freely as they pleased. To carry mimicry into the streets meant arrest for the elders, but not always for the children. You have heard the story, which is true, of how some gamins put carrots in old bowler hats to represent the spikes of German helmets, and at their leader's command of "On to Paris!" did a goose-step backwards. There is another which you may not have heard of a small boy who put on grandfather's spectacles, a pillow under his coat, and a card on his cap, "Officer of the Landsturm." The conquerors had enough sense not to interfere with the battalion which was taking Paris; but the pseudo-Landsturm officer was chased into a doorway and got a cuff after his placard was taken away from him.

When a united public opinion faces bayonets it is not altogether helpless to reply. By the atmospheric force of mass it enjoys a conquest of its own. If a German officer or soldier entered a street car, women drew aside in a way to indicate that they did not want their garments contaminated. People walked by the sentries in the streets giving them room as you would give a mangy dog room, yet as if they did not see the sentries; as if no sentries existed.

The Germans said that they wanted to be friendly. They even expressed surprise that the Belgians would

not return their advances. They sent out invitations to social functions in Brussels, but no one came — not even to a ball given by the soldiers to the daughters of the poor. Belgium stared its inhospitality, its contempt, its cynical drolleries at the invader.

I kept thinking of a story I heard in Alaska of a man who had shown himself yellow by cheating his partner out of a mine. He appeared one day hungry at a cabin occupied by half a dozen men who knew him. They gave him food and a bunk that night; they gave him breakfast; they even carried his blanket roll out to his sled and harnessed his dogs as a hint, and saw him go without one man having spoken to him. No matter if that man believed he had done no wrong, he would have needed a rhinoceros' hide not to have felt this silence. Such treatment the Belgians have given to the Germans, except that they furnished the shelter and harnessed the team under duress, as they so specifically indicate by every act. No wonder, then, that the old Landsturm guards, used at home to saying *"Wie gehts?"* and getting a cheery answer from the people they passed in the streets, were lonely.

Not only stubborn, but shrewd, these Belgians. Both qualities were brought out in the officials who had to deal with the Germans, particularly in the small towns and where destruction had been worst. Take, for example, M. Nerincx, of Louvain, who has energy enough to carry him buoyantly through an American political campaign, speaking from morning to midnight. He had been in America. I insisted that he ought to give up his professorship, get naturalised, and run for office at home. I know that he would soon be mayor of a town, or in Congress.

When the war began he was professor of international law at the ancient university whose walls alone stand, surrounding the ashes of its priceless volumes, across from the ruined cathedral. With the burgomaster a refugee from the horrors of that orgy, he turned man of action on behalf of the demoralised people of the town with a thousand homes in ruins. Very lucky the client in its lawyer. He is the kind of man who makes the best of the situation; picks up the fragments of the pitcher, cements them together with the first material at hand, and goes for more milk. It was he who got a German commander to sign an agreement not to "kill, burn, or plunder" any more, and the signs were still up on some houses saying that "This house is not to be burned except by official order."

There in the Hôtel de Ville, which is quite unharmed, he had his office within reach of the German commander. He yielded to Cæsar and protected his own people day in and day out, diplomatic, watchful, Belgian. And he was cheerful. What other people could have preserved any vestige of it! Sometimes one wondered if it were not partly due to an absence of keen nerve-sensibilities, or to some other of the traits which are a product of the Belgian hothouse and Belgian inheritance.

I might tell you about M. Nerincx's currency system; how he issued paper promises to pay when he gave employment to the idle in repairing those houses which permitted of being repaired and cleaned the streets of *débris,* till ruined Louvain looked as shipshape as ruined Pompeii; and how he got a little real money from Brussels to stop depreciation when the

storekeepers came to him and said that they had stacks of his notes which no mercantile concern would cash.

M. Nerincx was practising in the life about all that he ever learned and taught at the university, "which we shall rebuild!" he declared, with cheery confidence. "You will help us in America," he said. "I'm going to America to lecture one of these days about Louvain!"

"You have the most famous ruins, unless it is Rheims," I assured him. "You will get flocks of tourists"— particularly if he fenced in the ruins of the library and burned leaves of ancient books were on sale.

"Then you will not only have fed, but have helped to rebuild Belgium," he added.

A shadow of apprehension overhung his anticipation of the day of Belgium's delivery. Many a Belgian had arms hidden from the alert eye of German espionage, and his bitterness was solaced by the thought: "I'll have a shot at the Germans when they go!" The lot of the last German soldiers to leave a town, unless the garrison slips away overnight, would hardly make him a good life insurance risk.

My last look at a Belgian bread line was at Liége, that town which had had a blaze of fame in August, 1914, and was now almost forgotten. An industrial town, its mines and works were idle. The Germans had removed the machinery for rifle-making, which has become the most valuable kind of machinery in the world next to that for making guns and shells. If skilled Belgians here or elsewhere were called upon to serve the Germans at their craft, they suddenly became butter-fingered. So that bread line at Liége was

long, its queue stretching the breadth of the cathedral square.

As most of the regular German officers in Belgium were cavalrymen — there was nothing for cavalry to do on the Aisne line of trenches — it was quite in keeping that the aide to the commandant of Liége, who looked after my pass to leave the country, should be a young officer of Hussars. He spoke English well; he was amiable and intelligent. While I waited for the commandant to sign the pass he chatted of his adventures on the pursuit of the British to the Marne. The British fought like devils, he said. It was a question if their new army would be so good. He showed me a photograph of himself in a British Tommy's overcoat.

"When we took some prisoners I was interested in their overcoats," he explained. "I asked one of the Tommies to let me try on his. It fitted me perfectly, so I kept it as a souvenir and had this photograph made to show my friends."

Perhaps a shade of surprise passed over my face.

"You don't understand," he said. "That Tommy had to give me his coat! He was a prisoner."

On my way out from Liége I was to see Visé — the town of the gateway — the first town of the war to suffer from frightfulness. I had thought of it as entirely destroyed. A part of it had survived.

A delightful old Bavarian Landsturm man searched me for contraband letters when our cart stopped on the Belgian side of a barricade at Maastricht, with Dutch soldiers on the other side. His examination was a little perfunctory, almost apologetic, and he did want to be friendly. You guessed that he was thinking he would like to go around the corner and have

*"ein Glas Bier"* rather than search me. What a hearty *"Auf wiedersehen!"* he gave me when he saw that I was inclined to be friendly, too!

I was glad to be across that frontier, with a last stamp on my *Passierschein;* glad to be out of the land of those ghostly Belgian millions in their living death; glad not to have to answer again their ravenously whispered "When?" When would the Allies come?

The next time that I was in Belgium it was in the British lines of the Ypres salient, two months later. When should I be next in Brussels? With a victorious British army, I hoped. A long wait it was to be for a conquered people, listening each day and trying to think that the sound of gun-fire was nearer.

The stubborn, passive resistance and self-sacrifice that I have pictured was that of a moral leadership of a majority shaming the minority; or an ostracism of all who had relations with the enemy. Of course, it was not the spirit of the whole. The American Commission, as charity usually must, had to overcome obstacles set in its path by those whom it would aid. Belgian politicians, in keeping with the weakness of their craft, could no more forego playing politics in time of distress than some that we had in San Francisco and some we have heard of only across the British Channel from Belgium.

Zealous leaders exaggerated the famine of their districts in order to get larger supplies; communities in great need without spokesmen must be reached; powerful towns found excuses for not forwarding food to small villages which were without influence. Natural greed got the better of men used to turning a penny anyway they could. Rascally bakers who sifted the

brown flour to get the white to sell to *patisseries* and the well-to-do, while the bread line got the bran, required shrewd handling when the only means of punishment was through German authority.

"The local burgomaster yesterday offered to sell me some of your Commission's flour," wrote a German commandant. "I bought it and have the receipt, in order to prove to you that these Belgians are what we say they are — a vile people. I am turning the flour over to your Commission. We said that we would not take any of it and the German Government keeps its word."

How that commandant enjoyed making that score! As for the burgomaster, he was proscribed in a way that will brand him among his fellow-citizens for life. When German soldiers took bread from families where they were billeted, the German Government turned over an amount of flour equivalent to the bread consumed.

A certain percentage of Belgians saw the invasion only as a visitation of disaster, like an earthquake. A flat country of gardens limits one's horizon. They fell in line with the sentiment of the mass. But as time wore on into the summer and autumn of the second year, some of them began to think, What was the use? German propaganda was active. All that the Allies had cared for Belgium was to use her to check the German tide to Paris and the Channel ports! Perfidious England had betrayed Belgium! German business and banking influences, which had been considerable in Belgium before the war, and the numerous German residents who had returned, formed a busy circle of appeal to Belgian business men, who were told that the British navy stood between them and a return

to prosperity. Germany was only too willing that they should resume their trade with the rest of the world.

Why should not Belgium come into the German customs union? Why should not Belgium make the best of her unfortunate situation, as became a practical and thrifty people? But be it a customs union or annexation that Germany plans, the steel had entered the hearts of all Belgians with red corpuscles; and King Albert and his *shipperkes* were still fighting the Germans at Dixmude. A British army appearing before Brussels would end casuistry; and pessimism would pass, and the German residents, too, with the huzzas of all Belgium as the gallant King once more ascended the steps of his palace.

Worthy of England at her best was her consent to allow the Commission's food to pass, which she accompanied by generous giving. She might be slow in making ready her army, but give she could and give she did. It was a grave question if her consent was in keeping with the military policy which believes that any concession to sentiment in the grim business of war is unwise. Certainly, the *Krieg ist Krieg* of Germany would not have permitted it.

There is the very point of the war that makes a neutral take sides. If the Belgians had not received bread from the outside world, then Germany would either have had to spare enough to keep them from starving or faced the desperation of a people who fight for food with such weapons as they had. This must have meant a holocaust of reprisals that would have made the orgy of Louvain comparatively unimportant. However much the Germans hampered the Commission with red tape and worse than red tape through

the activities of German residents in Belgium, Germany did not want the Commission to withdraw. It was helping her to economise her food supplies. And England answered a human appeal at the cost of hard and fast military policy. She was still true to the ideals which have set their stamp on half the world.

# XII

## WINTER IN LORRAINE

Paris resuming normality — Regular train service — Nancy under fire — By automobile to the front — Panorama of the contested lines — View of the German wedge — French veterans — Ancient Lorraine — A vision of battle — Résumé of the struggle — The first German advance — "The face of the earth sown with shells" — The Kaiser silenced — The German Lorraine campaign lost — Visit to a French heavy battery — Underground quarters — A policed army — Military simplicity.

ONLY a winding black streak, that four hundred and fifty miles of trenches on a flat map. It is difficult to visualise the whole as you see it in your morning paper, or to realise the labour it represents in its course through the mire and over mountain slopes, through villages and thick forests and across open fields.

Every mile of it was located by the struggle of guns and rifles and men coming to a stalemate of effort, when both dug into the earth and neither could budge the other. It is a line of countless battles and broken hopes; of as brave charges as men ever made; a symbol of skill and dogged patience and eternal vigilance of striving foe against striving foe.

From the first, the sector from Rheims to Flanders was most familiar to the public. The world still thinks of the battle of the Marne as an affair at the door of Paris, though the heaviest fighting was from Vitry le François eastward and the fate of Paris was no less decided on the fields of Lorraine than on the fields of Champagne. The storming of Rheims cathe-

dral became the theme of thousands of words of print to one word for the defence of the Plateau d'Amance or the struggle around Lunéville. Our knowledge of the war is from glimpses through the curtain of military secrecy which was drawn tight over Lorraine and the Vosges, shrouded in mountain mists. This is about Lorraine in winter, when the war was six months old.

But first, on our way, a word about Paris, which I had not seen since September. At the outset of the war, Parisians who had not gone to the front were in a trance of suspense; they were magnetised by the tragic possibilities of the hour. The fear of disaster was in their hearts, though they might deny it to themselves. They could think of nothing but France. Now they realised that the best way to help France was by going on with their work at home. Paris was trying to be normal, but no Parisian was making the bluff that Paris was normal. The Gallic lucidity of mind prevented such self-deception.

Is it normal to have your sons, brothers, and husbands up to their knees in icy water in the trenches, in danger of death every minute? This attitude seems human; it seems logical. One liked the French for it. He liked them for boasting so little. In their effort at normality they had accomplished more than they realised. After all, only one-thirtieth of the area of France was in German hands. A line of steel made the rest safe for those not at the front to pursue the routine of peace.

When I had been in Paris in September there was no certainty about railroad connections anywhere. You went to the station and took your chances, governed by the movement of troops, not to mention other

conditions. This time I took the regular noon express to Nancy, as I might have done to Marseilles, or Rome, or Madrid, had I chosen. The sprinkling of quiet army officers on the train were in the new uniform of peculiar steely grey, in place of the target blue and red. But for them and the number of women in mourning and one other circumstance, the train might have been bound for Berlin, with Nancy only a stop on the way.

The other circumstance was the presence of a soldier in the vestibule who said: *"Votre laisser-passer, monsieur, s'il vous plaît!"* If you had a *laisser-passer,* he was most polite; but if you lacked one, he would also have been most polite and so would the guard that took you in charge at the next station. In other words, monsieur, you must have something besides a railroad ticket if you are on a train that runs past the fortress of Toul and your destination is Nancy. You must have a military pass, which was never given to foreigners if they were travelling alone in the zone of military operations. The pulse of the Frenchman beats high, his imagination bounds, when he looks eastward. To the east are the lost provinces and the frontier drawn by the war of '70 between French Lorraine and German Lorraine. This gave our journey interest.

Nancy, capital of French Lorraine, is so near Metz, the great German fortress town of German Lorraine, that excursion trains used to run to Nancy in the opera season. "They are not running this winter," say the wits of Nancy. "For one reason, we have no opera — and there are other reasons."

An aeroplane from the German lines has only to toss a bomb in the course of an average reconnaissance

on Nancy if it chooses; Zeppelins are within easy commuting distance. But here was Nancy as brilliantly lighted at nine in the evening as any city of its size at home. Our train, too, had run with the windows unshaded. After the darkness of London, and after English trains with every window shade closely drawn, this was a surprise.

It was a threat, an anticipation, that has darkened London, while Nancy knew fulfilment. Bombardment and bomb dropping were nothing new to Nancy. The spice of danger gives a fillip to business in the town whose population heard the din of the most thunderously spectacular action of the war echoing among the surrounding hills. Nancy saw the enemy beaten back. Now she was so close to the front that she felt the throb of the army's life.

"Don't you ever worry about aerial raids?" I asked madame behind the counter at the hotel.

"Do the men in the trenches worry about them?" she answered. "We have a much easier time than they. Why shouldn't we share some of their dangers? And when a Zeppelin appears and our guns begin firing, we all feel like soldiers under fire."

"Are all the population here as usual?"

"Certainly, monsieur!" she said. "The Germans can never take Nancy. The French are going to take Metz!"

The meal which that hotel restaurant served was as good as in peace times. Who deserves a good meal if not the officer who comes in from the front? And madame sees that he gets it. She is as proud of her *poulet en casserole* as any commander of a *soixante-quinze* battery of its practice. There was steam heat,

too, in the hotel, which gave an American a homelike feeling.

In a score of places in the Eastern States you see landscapes with high hills like the spurs of the Vosges around Nancy sprinkled with snow and under a blue mist. And the air was dry; it had the life of our air. Old Civil War men who had been in the Tennessee Mountains or the Shenandoah Valley would feel perfectly at home in such surroundings; only the foreground of farm land which merges into the crests covered with trees in the distance is more finished. The people were tilling it hundreds of years before we began tilling ours. They till well; they make Lorraine a rich province of France.

With guns pounding in the distance, boys in their capes were skipping and frolicking on their way to school; housewives were going to market, and the streets were spotlessly clean. All the men of Nancy not in the army pursued their regular routine while the army went about its business of throwing shells at the Germans. On the dead walls of the buildings were M. Deschanel's speech in the Chamber of Deputies, breathing endurance till victory, and the call for the class of recruits of 1915, which you will find on the walls of the towns of all France beside that of the order of mobilisation in August, now weather-stained. Nancy seemed, if anything, more French than any interior French town. Though near the border, there is no touch of German influence. When you walked through the old Place Stanislaus, so expressive of the architectural taste bred for centuries in the French, you understand the glow in the hearts of this very French population which made them uncon-

scious of danger while their flag was flying over this very French city.

No two Christian peoples we know are quite so different as the French and the Germans. To each every national thought and habit incarnates a patriotism which is in defiance of that on the other side of the frontier. Over in America you may see the good in both sides, but no Frenchman and no German can on the Lorraine frontier. If he should, he would no longer be a Frenchman or a German in time of war.

At our service in front of the hotel were waiting two mortals in goatskin coats, with scarfs around their ears and French military caps on top of the scarfs. They were official army chauffeurs. If you have ridden through the Alleghenies in winter in an open car why explain that seeing the Vosges front in an automobile may be a joy ride to an Eskimo, but not to your humble servant? But the roads were perfect; as good wherever we went in this mountain country as from New York to Poughkeepsie. I need not tell you this if you have been in France; but you will be interested to know that Lorraine keeps her roads in perfect repair even in war time.

Crossing the swollen Moselle on a military bridge, twisting in and out of valleys and speeding through villages, one saw who were guarding the army's secrets, but little of the army itself and few signs of transportation on a bleak, snowy day. At the outskirts of every village, at every bridge, and at intervals along the road, Territorial sentries stopped the car. Having an officer along was not sufficient to let you whizz by important posts. He must show his pass. Every sentry was a reminder of the hopelessness of being a correspondent these days without official sanction.

The sentries were men in the thirties. In Belgium, their German counterpart, the Landsturm, were the monitors of a journey that I made. No troops are more military than the first line Germans; but in the snap and spirit of his salute the French Territorial has an *élan,* a martial fervour, which the phlegmatic German in the thirties lacks.

Occasionally we passed scattered soldiers in the village streets, or a door opened to show a soldier figure in the doorway. The reason that we were not seeing anything of the army was the same that keeps the men and boys who are on the steps of the country grocery in summer at home around the stove in winter. All these villages were full of reservists who were indoors. They could be formed in the street ready for the march to any part of the line where a concentrated attack was made almost as soon after the alarm as a fire engine starts to a fire.

Now, imagine your view of a ball game limited to the batter and the pitcher: and that is all you see in the low country of Flanders. You have no grasp of what all the noise and struggle means, for you cannot see over the shoulders of the crowd. But in Lorraine you have only to ascend a hill and the moves in the chess game of war are clear.

A panorama unfolds as our car takes a rising grade to the village of Ste. Geneviève. We alight and walk along a bridge, where the sentry or a lookout is on watch. He seems quite alone, but at our approach a dozen of his comrades come out of their "home" dug in the hillside. Wherever you go about the frozen country of Lorraine it is a case of flushing soldiers from their shelters. A small, semicircular table is set up before the lookout, like his compass before

a mariner. Here run blue pencil lines of direction pointing to Pont-à-Mousson, to Château-Salins, and other towns. Before us to the east rose the tree-clad crests of the famous Grand Couronné of Nancy, and faintly in the distance we could see Metz, that strong fortress town in German Lorraine.

"Those guns that I hear, are they firing across the frontier?" I asked. For some French batteries command one of the outer forts of Metz.

"No, they are near Pont-à-Mousson."

To the north the little town of Pont-à-Mousson lay in the lap of the river bottom, and across the valley, to the west, the famous Bois le Prêtre. More guns were speaking from the forest depths, which showed great scars where the trees had been cut to give fields of fire. This was well to the rear of our position — marking the boundaries of the wedge that the Germans drove into the French lines, with its point at St. Mihiel — in trying to isolate the forts of Verdun and Toul. Doubtless you have noticed that wedge on the snake maps and have wondered about it, as I have. It looks so narrow that the French ought to be able to shoot across it from both sides. If not, why don't the Germans widen it?

Well, for one thing, a quarter of an inch on a map is a good many miles of ground. The Germans cannot spread their wedge because they would have to climb the walls of an alley. That was a fact as clear to the eye as the valley of the Hudson from West Point. The Germans occupy an alley within an alley, as it were. They have their own natural defences for the edges of their wedge; or, where they do not, they lie cheek by jowl with the French in such thick woods as the Bois le Prêtre.

At our feet, looking toward Metz, an apron of cultivated land swept down for a mile or more to a forest edge. This was cut by lines of trenches, whose barbed wire protection pricked a blanket of snow.

"Our front is in those woods," explained the colonel who was in command of the point.

"A major when the war began and an officer of reserves," *mon capitaine,* who had brought us out from Paris, explained about the colonel. We were soon used to hearing that a colonel had been a major or a major a captain before the Kaiser had tried to get Nancy. There was quick death and speedy promotion at the great battle of Lorraine, as there was at Gettysburg and Antietam.

"They charged out of the woods, and we had a battalion of reserves — here are some of them — *mes poilus!*"

He turned affectionately to the bearded fellows in scarfs who had come out of the shelter. They smiled back. Now, as we all chatted together, officer-and-man distinction disappeared. We were in a family party.

It was all very simple to *mes poilus,* that first fight. They had been told to hold. If Ste. Geneviève were lost, the Amance plateau was in danger, and the loss of the Amance plateau meant the fall of Nancy. Some military martinets say that the soldiers of France think too much. In this case thinking may have taught them responsibility. So they held; they lay tight, these reserves, and kept on firing as the Germans swarmed out of the woods.

"And the Germans stopped there, monsieur. They hadn't very far to go, had they? But the last

fifty yards, monsieur, are the hardest travelling when you are trying to take a trench."

They knew, these *poilus,* these veterans. Every soldier who serves in Lorraine knows. They themselves have tried to rush out of the edge of a woods across an open space against intrenched Germans, and found the shoe on the other foot.

Now the fields in the foreground down to the wood's edge were bare of any living thing. You had to take *mon capitaine's* word for it that there were any soldiers in front of us.

"The *Boches* are a good distance away at this point," he said. "They are in the next woods."

A broad stretch of snow lay between the two clumps of woods. It was not worth while for either side to try to get possession of the intervening space. At the first movement by either French or Germans the woods opposite would hum with rifle fire and echo with cannonading. So, like rival parties of Arctic explorers waiting out the Arctic winter, they watched each other. But if one force or the other napped, and the other caught him at it, then winter would not stay a brigade commander's ambition. Three days later in this region the French, by a quick movement, got a good bag of prisoners to make a welcome item for the daily French official bulletin.

"We wait and the Germans wait on spring for any big movement," said the colonel. "Men can't lie out all night in the advance in weather like this. In that direction—" He indicated a part of the line where the two armies were facing each other across the old frontier. Back and forth they had fought, only to arrive where they had begun.

There was something else which the colonel wished

us to see before we left the hill of Ste. Geneviève. It appealed to his Gallic sentiment, this quadrilateral of stone on the highest point where legend tells that "Jovin, a Christian and very faithful, vanquished the German barbarians 366 A.D."

"We have to do as well in our day as Jovin in his," remarked the colonel.

The church of Ste. Geneviève was badly smashed by shell. So was the church in the village on the Plateau d'Amance. Most churches in this district of Lorraine are. Framed through a great gap in the wall of the church of Amance was an immense Christ on the cross without a single abrasion, and a pile of *débris* at its feet. After seeing as many ruined churches as I have, one becomes almost superstitious at how often the figures of Christ escape. But I have also seen effigies of Christ blown to bits.

Any one who, from an eminence, has seen one battle fought visualises another readily when the positions lie at his feet. Looking out on the field of Gettysburg from Round Top, I can always get the same thrill that I had when, seated in a gallery above the Russian and the Japanese armies, I saw the battle of Liaoyang. In sight of that Plateau d'Amance, which rises like a great knuckle above the surrounding country, a battle covering twenty times the extent of Gettysburg raged, and one could have looked over a battle-line as far as the eye may see from a steamer's mast.

An icy gale swept across the white crest of the plateau on this January day, but it was nothing to the gale of shells that descended on it in late August and early September. Forty thousand shells, it is estimated, fell there. One kicked up fragments of steel on the field like peanut shells after a circus has gone.

Here were the emplacements of a battery of French *soixante-quinze* within a circle of holes torn by its adversaries' replies to its fire; a little farther along, concealed by shrubbery, the position of another battery which the enemy had not located.

"So that was it!" The struggle on the immense landscape, where at least a quarter of a million men were killed and wounded, became as simple as some Brobdignagian football match. Before the war began the French would not move a man within five miles of the frontier lest it be provocative: but once the issue was joined they sprang for Alsace and Lorraine, their imagination magnetised by the thought of the recovery of the lost provinces. Their Alpine chasseurs, mountain men of the Alpine and the Pyrenees districts, were concentrated for the purpose.

I recalled a remark I had heard: "What a pitiful little offensive that was!" It was made by one of those armchair "military experts," who look at a map and jump at a conclusion. They appear very wise in their wordiness when real military experts are silent for want of knowledge. Pitiful, was it? Ask the Germans who faced it what they think. Pitiful, that sweep over those mountain walls and through the passes? Pitiful, perhaps, because it failed, though not until it had taken Château-Salins in the north and Mulhouse in the south. Ask the Germans if they think that it was pitiful! The Confederates also failed at Antietam and at Gettysburg, but the Union army never thought of their efforts as pitiful.

The French fell back because all the weight of the German army was thrown against France, while the Austrians were left to look after the slowly mobilising Russians. Two million five hundred thousand men on

their first line the Germans had, as we know now, against the French twelve hundred thousand. To make sure of saving Paris as the Germans swung their mighty flanking column through Belgium, Joffre had to draw in his lines. The Germans came over the hills as splendidly as the French had gone. They struck in all directions toward Paris. In Lorraine was their left flank, the Bavarians, meant to play the same part to the east that von Kluck played to the west. We heard only of von Kluck and the British retreat from Mons; nothing of this terrific struggle in Lorraine.

From the Plateau d'Amance you may see how far the Germans came and what was their object. Between the fortresses of Épinal and of Toul lies the Trouée de Mirecourt — the Gap of Mirecourt. It is said that the French had purposely left it open when they were thinking of fighting the Germans on their own frontier and not on that of Belgium. They wanted the Germans to make their trial here — and wisely, for with all the desperate and courageous efforts of the Bavarian and Saxon armies they never got near the gap.

If they had forced it, however, with von Kluck swinging on the other flank, they might have got around the French army. Such was the dream of German strategy, whose realisation was so boldly and skilfully undertaken. The Germans counted on their immense force of artillery, built for this war in the last two years and outranging the French, to demoralise the French infantry. But the French infantry called the big shells "*marmites*" (saucepans), and made a joke of them and the death they spread as they tore up the fields in clouds of earth.

Ah, it took more than artillery to beat back the best troops of France in a country like this — a country of rolling hills and fenceless fields cut by many streams and set among thick woods, where infantry on a bank or at a forest's edge with rifles and rapid-firers and guns kept their barrels cool until the charge developed in the open. Some of these forests are only a few acres in extent; others are hundreds of acres. In the dark depths of one a frozen lake was seen glistening from our position on the Plateau d'Amance.

"Indescribable that scene which we witnessed from here," said an officer, who had been on the plateau throughout the fighting. "All the splendid majesty of war was set on a stage before you. It was intoxication. We could see the lines of troops in their retreat and advance, batteries and charges shrouded in shrapnel smoke. What hosts of guns the Germans had! They seemed to be sowing the whole face of the earth with shells. The roar of the thing was like that of chaos itself. It was the exhilaration of the spectacle that kept us from dropping from fatigue. Two weeks of this business! Two weeks with every unit of artillery and infantry always ready, if not actually engaged!"

The general in command was directing not one but many battles, each with a general of its own; manœuvring troops across the streams and open places, seeking the cover of forests, with the aeroplanes unable to learn how many of the enemy were hidden in the forests on his front, while he tried to keep his men out of angles and make his movements correspond with those of the divisions on his right and left. Skill this requires; skill equivalent to German skill; the skill

which you cannot organise in a month after calling for a million volunteers, but which grows through years of organisation.

Shall I call the general in chief command General X? This is according to the custom of anonymity. A great modern army like the French is a machine; any man, high or low, only a unit of the machine. In this case the real name of X is Castelnau. If it lacks the fame which may seem its due, that may be because he was not operating near a transatlantic cable end. Fame is not the business of French generals nowadays. It is war. What counted for France was that he never let the Germans get near the gap at Mirecourt.

Having failed to reach the gap, the Germans, with that stubbornness of the offensive which characterises them, tried to take Nancy. They got a battery of heavy guns within range of the city. From a high hill it is said that the Kaiser watched the bombardment. But here is a story. As the German infantry advanced toward their new objective they passed a French artillery officer in a tree. He was able to locate that heavy battery and able to signal its position back to his own side. The French concentrated sufficient fire to silence it after it had thrown forty shells into Nancy. The same report tells how the Kaiser folded his cloak around him and walked down in silence from his eminence, where the sun blazed on his helmet. It was not the Germans' fault that they failed to take Nancy. It was due to the French.

Some time a tablet will be put up to denote the high-water mark of the German invasion of Lorraine. It will be between the edge of the forest of Champenoux and the heights. When the Germans charged from

the cover of the forest to get possession of the road to Nancy, the French guns and mitrailleuses which had held their fire turned loose. The rest of the story is how the French infantry, impatient at being held back, swept down in a counter-attack, and the Germans had to give up their campaign in Lorraine as they gave up their campaign against Paris in the early part of September. Saddest of all lost opportunities to the correspondent in this war is this fighting in Lorraine. One had only to climb a hill in order to see it all!

In half an hour, as the officer outlined the positions, we had lived through the two weeks' fighting; and, thanks to the fairness of his story — that of a professional soldier without illusions — we felt that we had been hearing history while it was very fresh.

"They are very brave and skilful, the Germans," he said. "We still have a battery of heavy guns on the plateau. Let us go and see it."

We went, picking our way among the snow-covered shell pits. At one point we crossed a communicating trench, where soldiers could go and come to the guns and the infantry positions without being exposed to shell fire. I noticed that it carried a telephone wire.

"Yes," said the officer; "we had no ditch during the fight with the Germans, and we were short of telephone wire for a while; so we had to carry messages back and forth as in the old days. It was a pretty warm kind of messenger service when the German *marmites* were falling their thickest."

At length he stopped before a small mound of earth not in any way distinctive at a short distance on the uneven surface of the plateau. I did not even notice that there were three other such mounds. He pointed

to a hole in the ground. I had been used to going through a manhole in a battleship turret, but not through one into a field-gun position before aeroplanes played a part in war.

"*Entrez, monsieur!*"

And I stepped down to face the breech of a gun whose muzzle pointed out of another hole in the timbered roof covered with earth.

"It's very cosy!" I remarked.

"Oh, this is the shop! The living-room is below — here!"

I descended a ladder into a cellar ten feet below the gun level, where some of the gunners were lying on a thick carpet of perfectly dry straw.

"You are not doing much firing these days?" I suggested.

"Oh, we gave the *Boches* a couple this morning so they wouldn't get cocky thinking they were safe. It's necessary to keep your hand in even in the winter."

"Don't you get lonesome?"

"No, we shift on and off. We're not here all the while. It is quite warm in our salon, monsieur, and we have good comrades. It is war. It is for France. What would you?"

Four other gun positions and four other cellars like this! Thousands of gun positions and thousands of cellars! Man invents new powers of destruction and man finds a way of escaping them.

As we left the battery we started forward, and suddenly out of the dusk came a sharp call. A young corporal confronted us. Who were we and what business had we prowling about on that hill? If there had been no officer along and I had not had a *laisser-passer* on my person, the American Ambassador to

France would probably have had to get another countryman out of trouble.

The incident shows how thoroughly the army is policed and how surely. Editors who wonder why their correspondents are not in the front line catching bullets, please take notice.

It was dark when we returned to the little village on the plateau where we had left our car. The place seemed uninhabited with all the blinds closed. But through one uncovered window I saw a room full of chatting soldiers. We went to pay our respects to the colonel in command, and found him and his staff around a table covered with oilcloth in the main living-room of a villager's house. He spoke of his men, of their loyalty and cheerfulness, as the other commanders had, as if this were his only boast. These French officers have little "side"; none of that toe-the-mark, strutting militarism which some soldiers think necessary to efficiency. They live very simply on campaign, though if they do get to town for a few hours they enjoy a good meal. If they did not, madame at the restaurant would feel that she was not doing her duty to France.

# XIII

## SMILES AMONG RUINS

Elation in the cause — From Nancy southward — A giant Frenchman — Personnel of the French machine — *Déjeuner* — Father Joffre's boarding establishment — A thrifty army — Responsibility in a democracy — Determination for final peace — "Rural free delivery" at the front — A card-indexed army — Their families — Battlefields that saved Paris — Souvenirs aplenty — Ruthless "military advantage" — A shattered farmhouse — Helping the farmers — Construction of trenches — In the front line trench — Watchful waiting — The Lorraine country — Widespread destruction — Another "Louvain" — A brave and great Sister — Thrilling attacks — "It was for France!" — His Honour, the Mayor — The tricolour in Lorraine.

SCORCHED piles of brick and mortar where a home has been ought to make about the same impression anywhere. When you have gone from Belgium to French Lorraine, however, you will know quite the contrary. In Belgium I suffered all the depression which a nightmare of war's misery can bring; in French Lorraine I found myself sharing something of the elation of a man who looks at a bruised knuckle with the consciousness that it broke a burglar's jaw.

A Belgian repairing the wreck of his house was a grim, heartbreaking picture; a Frenchman of Lorraine repairing the wreck of his house had the light of hard-won victory, of confidence, of sacrifice made to a great purpose, of freedom secure for future generations, in his eyes. The difference was this: The Germans were still in Belgium; they were out of French Lorraine for good.

"What matters a shell-hole through my walls and

my torn roof!" said a Lorraine farmer. "Work will make my house whole. But nothing could ever have made my heart and soul whole while the Germans remained. I saw them go, monsieur; they left us ruins, but France is ours!"

I had thought it a pretty good thing to see something of the Eastern French front; but a better thing was the happiness I found there. *Mon capitaine* had come out from the Ministry of War in Paris; but when we set out from Nancy southward, we had a different local guide, a major belonging to the command in charge of the region which we were to visit. He was another example which upsets certain popular notions of Frenchmen as gesticulating, excitable little men. Some six feet two in height, he had an eye that looked straight into yours, a very square chin, and a fine forehead. You had only to look at him and size him up on points to conclude that he was all there; that he knew his work.

"Well, we've got good weather for it to-day, monsieur," said a voice out of a goatskin coat, and I found we had the same chauffeur as before. These French privates talk to you and you talk to them. They are not simply moulds of flesh in military form who salute and salute and salute. They take an interest in your affairs and you take an interest in theirs; they make you feel like home folks.

The sun was shining — a warm winter sun like that of a February thaw in our Northern States — glistening on the snowy fields and slopes among the forests and tree-clad hills of the mountainous country. Faces ambushed in whiskers thought it was a good day for trimming beards and washing clothes. The sentries along the roads had their scarfs around their

necks instead of over their ears. A French soldier makes ear muffs, chest protector, nightcap, and a blanket out of the scarf which wife or sister knits for him. If any woman who reads this knits one to send to France she may be sure that the fellow who received it will get every stitch's worth out of it.

To-day, then, it was war without mittens. You did not have to sound the bugle to get soldiers out of their burrows or their houses. Our first stop was at our own request, in a village where groups of soldiers were taking a sun bath. More came out of the doors as we alighted. They were all in the late twenties or early thirties, men of a reserve regiment. Some had been clerks, some labourers, some farmers, some employers, when the war began. Then they were *piou-pious*, in French slang; then all France prayed godspeed to its beloved *piou-pious*. Then you knew the clerk by his pallor; the labourer by his hard hands; the employer by his manner of command. Now they were *poilus* — bearded, hard-eyed veterans; you could not tell the clerk from the labourer or the employer from the peasant.

Any one who saw the tenderfoot pilgrimage to the Alaskan gold field in '97–'98 and the same crowd six months later will understand what had happened to these men. The puny had put on muscle; the city dweller had blown his lungs; the fat man had lost some adipose; social differences of habit had disappeared. That gentleman used to his bath and linen sheets and the hard living farmer or labourer — all had had to eat the same kind of food, do the same work, run the same risks in battle, and sleep side by side in the houses where they were lodged and in the dugouts of the trenches when it was their turn to occupy them through

the winter. Any "snob" had his edges trimmed by the banter of his comrades. Their beards accentuated the likeness of type. A cheery lot of faces and intelligent, these, which greeted us with curious interest.

"Perhaps President Wilson will make peace," one said.

"When?" I asked.

A shrug of the shoulder, a gesture to the East, and the answer was:

"When we have Alsace-Lorraine back."

Under a shed their *déjeuner* was cooking. This meal at noon is the meal of the day to the average Frenchman, who has only bread and coffee in the morning. They say he objects to fighting at luncheon time. That is the hour when he wants to sit down and forget his work and laugh and talk and enjoy his eating. The Germans found this out and tried to take his trenches at the noon hour. This interference with his gastronomic habits made him so angry that he dropped the knife and fork for the bayonet and took back any lost ground in a ferocious counter-attack. He would teach those *"Boches"* to leave him to eat his *déjeuner* in peace.

That appetising stew in the kettles in the shed once more proved that Frenchmen know how to cook. I didn't blame them for objecting to being shot at by the Germans when they were about to eat it. The average French soldier is better fed than at home; he gets more meat, for a hungry soldier is usually a poor soldier. It is a very simple problem with France's fine roads to feed that long line when it is stationary. It is like feeding a city stretched out over a distance of

four hundred and fifty miles; a stated number of ounces each day for each man and a known number of men to feed. From the railroad head trucks and autobusses take the supplies up to the distributing points. At one place I saw ten Paris autobusses, their signs painted out in a steel-grey to hide them from aeroplanes, and not one of them had broken down through the war. The French take good care of their equipment and their clothes; they waste no food. As a people is, so is their army, and the French are thrifty by nature.

Father Joffre, as the soldiers call him, is running the next largest boarding establishment in Europe after the Kaiser and the Czar. And he has a happy family. It seemed to me that life ought to have been utterly dull for this characteristic group of *poilus,* living crowded together all winter in a remote village. Civilians sequestered in this fashion away from home are inclined to get grouchy on one another.

One of the officers in speaking of this said that early in the autumn the reserves were pretty homesick. They wanted to get back to their wives and children. Nostalgia, next to hunger, is the worst thing for a soldier. Commanders were worried. But as the winter wore on the spirit changed. The soldiers began to feel the spell of their democratic comradeship. The fact that they had fought together and survived together played its part; and individualism was sunk in the one thought that they were there for France. The fellowship of a cause taught them patience, brought them cheer. And another thing was the increasing sense of team play, of confidence in victory, which holds a ball team, a business enterprise, or an

army together. Every day the organisation of the army was improving; every day that indescribable and subtle element of satisfaction that the Germans were securely held was growing.

Every Frenchman saves something of his income; madame sees to it that he does. He knows that if he dies he will not leave wife and children penniless. His son, not yet old enough to fight, will come on to take his place. Men at home who are twenty-two or three and unmarried, men who are twenty-eight or thirty and not long married, and men of forty with some money put by, will, in turn, understand how their own class feels.

In ten minutes you had entered into the hearts of this single company in a way that made you feel that you had got into the heart of the whole French army. When you asked them if they would like to go home they didn't say "No!" all in a chorus, as if that were what the colonel had told them to say. They obey the colonel, but their thoughts are their own. Otherwise, these ruddy, healthy men, representing the people of France and not the cafés of Paris, would not keep France a republic.

Yes, they did want to go home. They did want to go home. They wanted their wives and babies; they wanted to sit down to morning coffee at their own tables. Lumps rose in their throats at the suggestion. But they were not going until the German peril was over forever. Why stop now, only to have another terrible war in thirty or forty years? A peace that would endure must be won. They had thought that out for themselves. They would not stick to their determination if they had not. This is the way of democracies. Thus every one was conscious that he

was fighting not merely to win, but for future generations.

"It happened that this great struggle which we had long feared came in our day, and to us is the duty," said one. You caught the spirit of comradeship passing the time with jests at one another's expense. One of the men who was not a full thirty-third degree *poilu* had compromised with the razor on a moustache as blazing red as his shock of hair.

"I think that the colonel gave him the tip that he would light the way for the Zeppelins," said a comrade.

"Envy! Sheer envy!" was the retort. "Look at him!" and he pointed at some scraggly bunches on chin and cheeks which resembled a young grass plat that had come up badly.

"I don't believe in air-tight beards," was the response.

When I produced a camera, the effect was the same as it always is with soldiers at the front. They all wanted to be in the photograph, on the chance that the folks at home might see how the absent son or father looked. Would I send them one? And the address was like this: "Monsieur Benevent, Corporal of Infantry, 18th Company, 5th Battalion, 299th Regiment of Infantry, Postal Sector No. 121," by which you will know the rural free delivery methods along the French front. This address is the one rift in the blank wall of anonymity which hides the individuality of the millions under Joffre. Only the army knows the sector and the number of the regiment in that sector. By the same kind of a card-index system Joffre might lay his hand on any one of his millions, each a human being with all a human being's

individual emotions, who, to be a good soldier, must be only one of the vast multitude of obedient chessmen.

"We are ready to go after them when Father Joffre says the word," all agreed. Joffre has proved himself to the democracy, which means the enthusiastic loyalty of a democracy's intelligence.

"If there are any homesick ones we should find them among the lot here," said *mon capitaine.*

These were the men who had not been long married. They were not yet past the honeymoon period; they had young children at home; perhaps they had become fathers since they went to war. The younger men of the first line had the irresponsibility and the ardour of youth which makes comradeship easy.

But the older men, the Territorials as they are called, in the late thirties and early forties, have settled down in life. Their families are established; their careers settled; some of them, perhaps, may enjoy a vacation from the wife, for you know madame, in France, with all her thrift, can be a little bossy, which is not saying that this is not a proper tonic for her lord. So the old boys seem the most content in the fellowship of winter quarters. What they cannot stand are repeated, long, hard marches; their legs give out under the load of rifle and pack. But their hearts are in the war, and right there is one very practical reason why they will fight well — and they have fought better as they hardened with time and the old French spirit revived in their blood.

*"Allons, messieurs!"* said the tall major, who wanted us to see battle-fields. It required no escort to tell us where the battle-field was. We knew it when we came to it as you know the point reached by high

tide on the sands — this field where many Gettysburgs were fought in one through that terrible fortnight in late August and early September, when the future of France and the whole world hung in the balance — as the Germans sought to reach Paris and win a decisive victory over the French army. Where destruction ended there the German invasion reached its limit.

Forests and streams and ditches and railroad culverts played their part in tactical surprises, as they did at Gettysburg; and cemetery walls, too. In all my battle-field visits in Europe I have not seen a single cemetery wall that was not loopholed. But the fences, which throughout the Civil War offered impediment to charges and screen to the troops which could reach them first, were missing. The fields lay in bold stretches, because it is the business of young boys and girls in Lorraine to watch the cows and keep them out of the corn.

We stopped at a crossroads where charges met and wrestled back and forth in and out of the ditches. Fragments of shells appeared as steps scuffed away the thin coating of snow. I picked up an old French cap, with a slash in the top that told how its owner came to his end, and near by a German helmet. For there are souvenirs in plenty lying in the young wheat which was sown after the battle was over. Millions of little nickel bullets are ploughed in with the blood of those who died to take the Kaiser to Paris and those who died to keep him out in this fighting across these fields and through the forests, in a tug of war of give-and-take, of men exhausted after nights and days under fire, men with bloodshot eyes sunk deep in the sockets, dust-laden, blood-spattered, with forty years

of latent human powder breaking forth into hell when the war was only a month old and passion was at a white heat.

Hasty shelter trenches gridiron the land; such trenches as breathless men, dropping after a charge, threw up hurriedly with the spades that they carry on their backs, to give them a little cover. And there is the trench that stopped the Germans — the trench which they charged but could not take. It lies among shell-holes so thick that you can step from one to another. In places its crest is torn away, which means that half a dozen men were killed in a group. But reserves filled their places. They kept pouring out their stream of lead which German courage could not endure. Thus far and no farther the invasion came in that wheat-field which will be ever memorable.

We went up a hill once crowned by one of those clusters of farm buildings of stone and mortar, where house and stables and granaries are close together. All around were bare fields. Those farm buildings stood up like a mountain peak. The French had the hill and lost it and recovered it. Whichever side had it, the other was bound to bathe it in shells because it commanded the country around. The value of property meant nothing. All that counted was military advantage. Because churches are often on hilltops, because they are bound to be used for lookouts, is why they get torn to pieces. When two men are fighting for life they don't bother about upsetting a table with a vase, or notice any " Keep off the grass " signs; no, not even if the family Bible be underfoot.

None of the roof, none of the superstructure of these farm buildings was left; only the lower walls, which were eighteen inches thick and in places pene-

trated by the shells. For when a Frenchman builds a farmhouse he builds it to last a few hundred years. The farm windmill was as twisted as a birdcage that has been rolled under a trolley car, but a large hayrake was unharmed. Such is the luck of war. I made up my mind that if I ever got under shell-fire I'd make for the hayrake and avoid the windmill.

Our tall major pointed out all the fluctuating positions during the battle. It was like hearing a chess match explained from memory by an expert. Words to him were something precious. He made each one count as he would the shots from his cannon. His narrative had the lucidity of a terse judge reviewing evidence. The battle-field was etched on his mind in every important phase of its action.

Not once did he speak in abuse of the enemy. The staff officer who directs steel ringing on steel is too busy thrusting and keeping guard to indulge in diatribes. To him the enemy is a powerful impersonal devil who must be beaten. When I asked about the conduct of the Germans in the towns they occupied, his lip tightened and his eyes grew hard.

"I'm afraid it was pretty bad!" he said; as if he felt, besides the wrong to his own people, the shame that men who had fought so bravely should act so ill. I think his attitude toward war was this: "We will die for France, but calling the Germans names will not help us to win. It only takes breath."

*"Allons, messieurs!"*

As our car ran up a gentle hill we noticed two soldiers driving a load of manure. This seemed a pretty prosaic, even humiliating, business, in a poetic sense, for the brave *poilus,* veterans of Lorraine's great battle. But Father Joffre is a true Frenchman

of his time. Why shouldn't the soldiers help the farmers whose sons are away at the front and perhaps helping farmers back of some other point of the line?

Over the crest of the hill we came on long lines of soldiers bearing timbers and fascines for trench building, which explained why some of the villages were empty. A fascine is something usually made of woven branches which will hold dirt in position. The woven wicker cases for shells which the German artillery uses and leaves behind when it has to quit the field in a hurry, make excellent fascines, and a number that I saw were of this ready-made kind. After carrying shells for killing Frenchmen they were to protect the lives of Frenchmen. Near by other soldiers were turning up a strip of fresh earth against the snow, which looked like a rip in the frosting of a chocolate cake.

"How do you like this kind of war?" we asked. It is the kind that irrigationists and subway excavators do.

"We've grown to be very fond of it," was the answer. "It is a cultivated taste, which becomes a passion with experience. After you have been shot at in the open you want all the earth you can get between you and the bullets."

Now we alighted from the automobile and went forward on foot. We passed some eight lines of trenches before we came to the one where we were to stop. A practised military eye had gone over all that ground; a practised military hand had laid out each trench. After the work was done the civilian's eye could grasp the principle. If one trench were taken, the men knew exactly how to fall back on the next, which commanded the ground they had left.

The trenches were not continuous. There were open spaces left purposely. All that front was literally locked, and double and triple locked, with trenches. Break through one barred door and there is another and another confronting you. Considering the millions of burrowing and digging and watching soldiers, it occurred to one that if a *marmite* (saucepan) came along and buried our little party, our loss would not be as much noticed as if a piece of coping from a high building had fallen and extinguished us on Broadway, which would be a relatively novel way of dying. Being killed in war had long ceased to be a novelty on the continent of Europe.

We seemed in a dead world, except for the leisurely, hoarse, muffled reports of a French gun in the woods on either side of the open space where we stood. Through our glasses we could see quite clearly the line of the German front trench, which was in the outskirts of a village on higher ground than the French. Not a human being was visible. Both sides were watching for any move of the other and meanwhile lying tight under cover. By day they were marooned. All supplies and all reliefs of men who are to take their turn in front go out by night.

There were no men in the trench where we stood; those who would man it in case of danger were in the adjoining woods, where they had only to cut down saplings and make shelters to be as comfortable as in a winter resort camp in the Adirondacks. Any minute they might receive a call — which meant death for many. But they were used to that, and their card games went on none the less merrily.

"No farther?" we asked our major.

"No farther!" he said. "This is risk enough for

you. It looks very peaceful, but the enemy could toss in some *marmites* if it pleased him." Perhaps he was exaggerating the risk for the sake of a realistic effect on the sightseers. No matter! In time one was to have risks enough in trenches. It was on such an occasion as this, on another part of the French line, that two correspondents slipped away from the officers conducting them, though their word of honour was given not to do so — which adds another reason for military suspicion of the press. The officers rang up the nearest telephone which connected with the front trenches, the batteries, and regimental and brigade headquarters, to apprehend two men of such-and-such description. They were taken as easily as a one-eyed, one-eared man, with a wooden leg and red hair, would be in trying to get out of police headquarters when the doorman had his Bertillon photograph and measurements to go by.

That battery hidden from aerial observation in the thick forest kept up its slow firing at intervals. It was "bothering" one of the German trenches. Fiendish the consistent regularity with which it kept on, and so easy for the gunners. They had only to slip in a shell, swing a breechlock home, and pull a lanyard. The German guns did not respond because they could not locate the French battery. They may have known that it was somewhere in the forest, but firing at two or three hundred acres of wood on the chance of reaching some guns heavily protected by earth and timbering was about like tossing a pea from the top of the Washington Monument on the chance of hitting a four-leafed clover on the lawn below.

Our little group remained, not standing in the trench, but back of it in full relief for some time; for

the German gunners refused to play for realism by sending us a *marmite.* Probably they had seen us through the telescope at the start and concluded we weren't worth a shot. In the first months of the war such a target would have received a burst of shells, for the fun of seeing us scatter, if nothing else. Then ammunition was plentiful and the sport of shooting had not lost its zest; but in these winter days orders were not to waste ammunition. The factories must manufacture a supply ahead for the summer campaign. There must be fifteen dollars' worth of target in sight, say, for the smallest shell costs that; and the shorter you are of shells the more valuable the target must be. Besides, firing a cannon had become as commonplace a function to both French and German gunners as getting up to put another stick of wood in the stove or going to open the door to take a letter from the postman.

We had glimpses of other trenches; but this is not the place in this book to write of trenches. We shall see trenches till we are weary of them later. We are going direct to Gerbeviller, which was — emphasis on the past tense — a typical little Lorraine town of fifteen hundred inhabitants. Look where you would now, as we drove along the road, and you saw churches without steeples, houses with roofs standing on sections of walls, houses smashed into bits.

"I saw no such widespread destruction as this in Belgium!" I exclaimed.

"There was no such fighting in Belgium," was the answer.

Of course not, except in the southwestern corner, where the armies still face each other.

"Not all the damage was done by the Germans,"

the major explained. "Naturally, when they were pouring in death from the cover of a house, our guns let drive at that house," he went on. "The owners of the houses that were hit by our shells are rather proud — proud of our marksmanship, proud that we gave the unwelcome guest a hot pill to swallow."

For ten days the Bavarians had Gerbeviller. They tore it to pieces before they got it, then burned the remains because they said the population sniped at them. All the orgy of Louvain was repeated here, unchronicled to our people at home. The church looks like a Swiss cheese from shell-holes. Its steeple was bound to be an observation post, reasoned the Germans; so they poured shells into it. But the brewery had a tall chimney which was an even better lookout, and the brewery is the one building unharmed in the town. The Bavarians knew that they would need that for their commissariat. For a Bavarian will not fight without his beer. The land was littered with barrels after they had gone. I saw some in trenches occupied by Bavarian reserves not far back of where their firing-line had been.

"However, the fact that the brewery is intact and the church in ruins does not prove that a brewery is better than a church. It only proves which is the Lord's side in this war," said Sister Julie. But I get ahead of my story.

In the middle of the main street were half a dozen smoke-blackened houses which remained standing, an oasis in the sea of destruction, with doors and windows intact, facing gaps where doors and windows had been. We entered with a sense of awe of the chance which had spared these buildings.

"Sister Julie!" the major called.

A short, sturdy nun of about sixty years answered cheerily and appeared in the dark hall. She led us into the sitting-room, where she spryly placed chairs for our little party. She was smiling; her eyes were sparkling with a hospitable and kindly interest in us, while I felt, on my part, that thrill of curiosity that one always has when he meets some celebrated person for the first time — a curiosity no less keen than if I were to meet Barbara Frietchie.

Through all that battle of ten days, with the cannon never silent day or night, with shells screaming overhead and crashing into houses; through ten days of thunder and lightning and earthquake, she and her four sister associates remained in Gerbeviller. When the town was fired they moved from one building to another. They nursed both wounded French and Germans, also wounded townspeople who could not flee with the others.

"You were not frightened? You did not think of going away?" she was asked.

"Frightened?" she answered. "I had not time to think of that. Go away? How could I when the Lord's work had come to me?"

President Poincaré went in person to give her the Legion of Honour, the first given to a woman in this war; so rarely given to a woman, and here bestowed with the love of a nation. Sister Marie was in the kitchen at the time, very busy cooking the meal for the sick whom the sisters are still caring for. So Sister Julie took the President of France into the kitchen to meet Sister Marie, quite as she would take you or me. A human being is simply a human being to Sister Julie, to be treated courteously; and great men may not cause a meal for the sick to burn. After the com-

plexity of French politics, President Poincaré was anything but unfavourably impressed by the incident.

"He was such a little man, I could not believe at first that he could be President," she said. "I thought that the president of France would be a big man. But he was very agreeable and, I am sure, very wise. Then there were other men with him, a Monsieur de-de-Deschanel, who was president of something or other in Paris, and Monsieur du-du — yes, that was it, Du Bag. He also is president of something in Paris. They were very agreeable, too."

"And your Legion of Honour?"

"Oh, my medal that M. le Président gave me! I keep that in a drawer. I do not wear it every day when I am in my working clothes."

"Have you ever been to Paris?"

"No, monsieur."

"They will make a great ado over you when you go."

"I must stay in Gerbeviller. If I stayed during the fighting and when the Germans were here, why should I leave now? Gerbeviller is my home. There is much to do here, and there will be more to do when the people who were driven away return."

These nuns saw their townspeople stood up against a wall and shot; they saw their townspeople killed by shells. The cornucopia of war's horrors was emptied at their door. And women of a provincial town, who had led peaceful, cloistered lives, they did not blench or falter in the presence of ghastliness which only men are supposed to have the stoicism to witness.

What feature of the nightmare had held most vividly in Sister Julie's mind? It is hard to say; but the one which she dwelt on was about the boy and the cow.

The invaders, when they came in, ordered that no inhabitant leave his house, on pain of death. A boy of ten took his cow to pasture in the morning as usual. He did not see anything wrong in that. The cow ought to go to pasture. And he was shot, for he broke a military regulation. He might have been a spy using the cow as a blind. War does not bother to discriminate. It kills.

Sister Julie can enjoy a joke, particularly on the Germans, and her cheerful smile and genuine laugh are a lesson to all people who draw long faces in time of trouble and weep over spilt milk. A buoyant temperament and unshaken faith carried her through her ordeal. Though her hair is white, youth's optimism and confidence in the future and the joy of victory for France overshadowed the present. The town and church would be rebuilt; children would play in the streets again; there was a lot of the Lord's work to do yet.

In every word and thought she is French — French in her liveliness of spirit and quickness of comprehension; wholly French there on the borderland of Germany. If we only went to the outskirts of the town, she reminded us, we could see how the soldiers of her beloved France fought and why she was happy to have remained in Gerbeviller to welcome them back.

In sight of that intact brewery and that wreck of a church is a gentle slope of open field, cut by a road. Along the crest were many mounds as thick as the graves of a cemetery, and by the side of the road was a temporary monument above a big mound, surrounded by a sanded walk and a fence. The dead had been thickest at this point, and here they had been laid in a vast grave. The surviving comrades had

made that monument; and, in memory of what the dead had fought for, the living said that they were not yet ready to quit fighting.

Standing on this crest, you were a thousand yards away from the edge of a woods. German aeroplanes had seen the French massing for a charge under the cover of that crest; but French aeroplanes could not see what was in the woods. Rifles and machine guns poured a spray of lead across the crest when the French appeared. But the French, who were fighting for Sister Julie's town, would not stop their rush at first. They kept on, as Pickett's men did when the Federal guns riddled their ranks with grapeshot. This accounts for many of the mounds being well beyond the crest. The Germans made a mistake in firing too soon. They would have made a heavier killing if they had allowed the charge to go farther. After the French fell back, for two days and nights their wounded lay out on that field without water or food, between the two forces, and if their comrades approached to give succour the machine guns blazed more death, because the Germans did not want to let the French dig a trench on the crest. After two days the French forced the Germans out of the woods by hitting them from another point.

We went over the field of another charge half a mile away. There a French regiment put a stream with a single bridge at their back — which requires some nerve — and charged a German trench on rising ground. They took it. Then they tried to take the woods beyond. Before they were checked twenty-two officers out of a total of thirty fell. But they did not give up the ground they had won. They burrowed into the earth in a trench of their own, and

when help came they put the Germans out of the woods.

The men of this regiment were not first line, but the older fellows — men of the type we stopped to chat with in the village — hastening to the front when the war began. Their officers were mostly reserves, too, who left their civil occupations at the call of arms. One of the eight survivors of the thirty was with us, a stocky little man, hardly looking the hero or the soldier. I expressed my admiration, and he answered quietly: "It was for France!" How often I have heard that as a reason for courage or sacrifice! The brave enemies of France have learned to respect it, though they had a poor opinion of the French army before the war began. "That railroad bridge yonder the Germans left intact when they occupied it because they were certain that they would need it to supply their troops when they took the Gap of Mirecourt and surrounded the French army," I was told. "However, they had to go in such a hurry that they failed to mine it. They must have fired five hundred shells afterward to destroy it, in vain."

It was dusk when we entered the city of Lunéville for the second time. Whole blocks lay in ruins; others only showed where shells had crashed into walls. It is hard to estimate just how much damage shell-fire has done to a town, for you see the effects only where they have struck on the street sides and not when they strike in the centre of the block. But Lunéville has certainly suffered as much as Louvain, only we did not hear about it. Grim, sad Louvain, with its sentries among the ruins! Happy, triumphant Lunéville, with its *poilus* instead of German sentries!

"We are going to meet the mayor," said the major.

First we went to his office. But that was a mistake. We were invited to his house, which was a fine, old eighteenth-century building. If you could transport it to New York some arms-and-ammunition millionaire would give half a million dollars for it. The hallway was smoke-blackened and a burnt spot showed where the enemy had tried to set it on fire before evacuating the town. An ascent of a handsome old staircase and we were in rooms with gilded mirrors and carved old mantels, where we were introduced to His Honour, a lively man of forty.

"I have been in Amerique two months. So much English do I speak. No more!" said the mayor merrily, and introduced us in turn to his wife, who spoke not even "so much" English, but French as fast and as piquantly as only a Frenchwoman can. Her only son, who was seventeen, was going up with the 1916 class of recruits very soon. He was a sturdy youngster; a type of Young France who will make the France of the future.

"You hate to see him go?" I asked.

"It is for France!" she answered.

We had cakes and tea and a merrier — at least, a more heartfelt — party than at any mayor's reception in time of peace. Everybody talked. For the French do know how to talk, when they have not turned grim, silent soldiers. Foreigners say we do. Maybe it is a democratic weakness. I heard story on story of the German occupation, and how the mayor was put in jail and held as hostage, and what a German general said to him when he was brought in as a prisoner to be interrogated in his own house, which the general occupied as headquarters.

Among the guests was the wife of a French general in her Red Cross cap. She might see her husband once a week by meeting him on the road between the city and the front. He could not afford to be any farther from his post, lest the Germans spring a surprise. The extent of the information which he gave her was that all went well for France. Father Joffre plays no favourites in his discipline.

Happy, happy Lorraine in the midst of its ruins! Happy because her adored tricolour floats over those ruins.

# XIV

## A ROAD OF WAR I KNOW

Victoria Station — The "tenth man"— Leavetaking — Roar of London — British habits — Everywhere khaki — System at the French port — The correspondents' home — Strict censorship — The one link with the reading public — Necessity for censorship — Freedom of the press —"Jig-saw" intelligence experts — The run of the trenches — Exchange of slang — Organisation of General Headquarters — A business institution — A colossal dynamo.

OTHER armies go to war across the land, but the British go across the sea. They take the Channel ferry in order to reach the front. Theirs is the home road of war to me; the road of my affections, where men speak my mother tongue. It begins on the platform at Victoria Station, with the khaki of officers and men returning from leave, relieved by the warmer colours of women who have come to say good-bye to those they love. In five hours from the time of starting one may be across that ribbon of salt water, which means much in isolation and little in distance, and in the trenches.

That veteran regular — let us separate him from the crowd,— is a type I have often seen, a type that has become as familiar as one's neighbours in one's own town. We will call him the tenth man. That is, of every ten men who went to the front a year ago in his battalion, nine are gone. All of the hardships and all of the terrors of war he has witnessed: men dropped neatly by a bullet; men mangled by shells.

His khaki is spotless, thanks to his wife, who has

dressed in her best for the occasion. Terrible as war itself, but new, that hat of hers, which probably represented a good deal of looking into windows and pricing; and her gown of the cheapest material, drooping from her round shoulders, is the product of the poor dressmaking skill of hands which show only too well who does all the housework at home. The children, a boy of four and a girl of seven, are in their best, too, with faces scrubbed till they shine.

You will see like scenes in stations at home when the father has found work in a distant city and is going on ahead to get established before the family follow him. Such incidents are common in civil life; they became common at Victoria Station. What is common has no significance, editors say.

When the time came to go through the gate, the veteran picked the boy up in his arms and pressed him very close and the little girl looked on wonderingly, while the mother was not going to make it any harder for the father by tears. "Good-bye, Tom!" she said. So his name was Tom, this tenth man.

I spoke with him. His battalion was full with recruits. It had been kept full. But, considering the law of chance, what about the surviving one out of an original ten?

"Yes, I've had my luck with me," he said. "Probably my turn will come. Maybe I'll never see the wife and kids again."

The morning roar of London had begun. That station was a small spot in the city. There were not enough officers and men taking the train to make up a day's casualty list; for ours was only a small party returning from leave. The transports, unseen, carried the multitudes. Wherever one had gone in Eng-

land he had seen soldiers and wherever he went in France he was to see still more soldiers. England had become an armed camp; and England plodded on, "muddled" on, preparing, ever preparing, to forge in time of war the thunderbolt for war which was undreamed of in time of peace when other nations were forging their thunderbolts.

Still the recruiting posters called for more soldiers and the casualty lists appeared day after day with the regularity of want advertisements. Imagine eight million men under arms in the United States and you have the equivalent to what England did by the volunteer system. The more there were the more pessimistic became the British press. Pessimism brought in recruits. Bad news made England take another deep breath of energising determination. It was the last battle which was decisive. She had always won that. She would win it again.

They talk of war aboard the Pullman, after officers have waved their hands out of the windows to their wives, quite as if they were going to Scotland for a week-end instead of back to the firing-line. British phlegm that is called. No, British habit, I should say, the race-bred, individualistic quality of never parading emotions in public, the instinct of keeping things which are one's own to one's self. Personally, I like this way. In one form or another, as the hedges fly by the train windows, the subject is always war. War creeps into golf, or shooting, or investments, or politics. Only one suggestion quite frees the mind from the omnipresent theme: Will the Channel be smooth? The Germans have nothing to do with that. It is purely a matter of weather. Bad sailors are more

worried about the crossing than about the shell-fire they are going to face.

With bad sailors or good sailors, the significant thing which had become a commonplace was that the Channel was a safely-guarded British sea lane. In all my crossings I was never delayed. For England had one thunderbolt ready forged when the war began. The only submarines, or destroyers, or dirigibles that one saw were hers. Antennæ these of the great fleet waiting with the threat of stored lightning ready to be flashed from gun-mouths; a threat as efficacious as action, in nowise mysterious or subtle, but definite as steel and powder, speaking the will of a people in their chosen field of power, felt over all the seas of the world, coast of Maine and the Carolinas no less than Labrador. Thousands of transports had come and gone, carrying hundreds of thousands of soldiers and food for men and guns to India; and on the highroad to India, to Australia, to San Francisco, shipping went its way undisturbed by anything that dives or flies.

The same white hospital ships lying in that French harbour; the same line of grey, dusty-looking ambulances parked on the quay! Everybody in that one-time sleepy, week-end tourist resort seems to be in uniform; to have something to do with war. All surroundings become those of war long before you reach the front. That knot of civilians, waiting their turn for another examination of the same kind as that on the other side of the Channel, have shown good reasons for going to Paris to the French consul in London, or they might not proceed even this far on the road of war. They seem outcasts — a humble lot in the variegated costumes of the civil world — outcasts

from the disciplined world in its pattern garb of khaki. Their excuse for not being in the game is that they are too old or that they are women. For now the war has sucked into its vortex all who are strong enough to fight.

A traveller might be a spy; hence all this red tape for the many to catch the one in its mesh. Even this red tape seems now to have become normal. War is normal. It would seem strange to cross the Channel in a time of peace; the harbour would not look like itself with civilians not having to show their passports, and without the white hospital ships, and the white-bearded landing-officer at the foot of the gangway, and the board held up with lists of names of officers who have telegrams waiting for them.

For the civilians a yellow card of disembarkation and for the military a white card. The officers and soldiers walk off at once and the queue of civilians waits. One civilian with a white card, who belongs to no regiment, who is not even a chaplain or a nurse, puzzles the landing-officer for a moment. But there is something to go with it — a correspondent's licence and a letter from a general who looks after such things. They show that you "belong"; and if you don't belong on the road of war you will not get far. As well try to walk past the doorman and take a seat in the United States Senate chamber during a session.

Most precious that magical piece of paper. I happen to be the only American with one, unless he is in the fighting line — which is one sure way to get to the front. The price of all the opera boxes at the Metropolitan will not buy it; and it is the passport to the welcoming smile from an army chauffeur whom I almost

regard as my own. But its real value appears at the outskirts of the city. There the dead line is drawn; there the sheep are finally separated from the goats by a French sentry guarding the winding passageway between some carts, which have been in the same place in the road for months.

The car spins over the broad, hard French road, in a land where for many miles you see no signs of war, until it turns into the grounds of a small château opposite a village church. The proprietor of a dry-goods store in a neighbouring city spends his summers here; but this summer he is in town, because the press wanted a place to live and he was good enough to rent us his country place. So this is home, where the five British and one American correspondents live and mess. The expense of our cars costs us treble all the rest of our expenses. They take us where we want to go. We go where we please, but we may not write what we please. We see something like a thousand times more than we can tell. The conditions are such as to make a news reporter throw up his hands and faint. But if he had his unbridled way, one day he might feel the responsibility for the loss of some hundreds of British soldiers' lives.

"It may be all right for war correspondents, but it is a devil of a poor place for a newspaper man," as one editor said. Yet it is the only place where you can really know anything about the war.

We become a part of the machinery of the great organisation that encloses us in its regular processes. No one in his heart envies the press officer, who holds the blue pencil over us. He has to "take it both going and coming." He labours on our behalf and sometimes we labour with him. The staff are willing

enough to let us watch the army at work, but they do not care whether or not we write about their war; he wants us both to see it and to write about it. He tells us some big piece of news, and then says: "That is for yourselves; you may not write it."

People do not want to read about the correspondents, of course. They want to read what the correspondents have to tell about the war; but the conditions of our work are interesting because we are the link between the army and the reading public. All that it learns from actual observation of what the army is doing comes through us.

We may not give the names of regiments and brigades until weeks after a fight, because that will tell the enemy what troops were engaged; we may not give the names of officers, for that is glorifying one when possibly another did his duty equally well. It is the anonymity of the struggle that makes it all seem distant and unreal — till the telegram comes from the War Office to say that the one among the millions who is dear to you is dead or wounded. Otherwise, it is a torment of unidentified elements behind a curtain, which is parted for an announcement of a gain or a loss, or to give out a list of the fallen.

The world wants to read that Peter Smith led the King's Own Particular Fusiliers in a charge. It may not know Peter Smith, but his name and that of his regiment make the information seem definite. The statement that a well-known millionaire yesterday gave a million dollars to charity, or that a man in a checked suit swam from the Battery to Coney Island, is not convincing; nor is the fact that one private unnamed held back the Germans with bombs in the traverse of a trench for hours until help came. We at

the front, however, do know the names; we meet the officers and men. Ours is the intimacy which we may not interpret except in general terms.

Every article, every despatch, every letter, passes through the censor's hand. But we are never told what to write. The liberty of the press is too old an institution in England for that. Always we may learn why an excision is made. The purpose is to keep information from the enemy. It is not like fighting Boers or Filipinos, this war of walls of men who can turn the smallest bit of information to advantage.

Intelligence officers speak of their work as piecing together the parts of a jig-saw puzzle. What seems a most innocent fact by itself may furnish the bit which gives the figure in the picture its face. It does not follow because you are an officer that you know what may and what may not be of service to the enemy.

A former British officer who had become a well-known military critic, in an account of a visit to the front mentioned having seen a battle from a certain church tower. Publication of the account was followed by a tornado of shell-fire that killed and wounded many British soldiers. Only a staff specialist, trained in intelligence work and in constant touch with the intelligence department, can be a safe censor. At the same time, he is the best friend of the correspondent. He knows what is harmless and what may not be allowed. He wants the press to have as much as possible. For the more the public knows about its soldiers, the better the *morale* of the people, which reflects itself in the *morale* of the army.

The published casualty lists giving the names of officers and men and their battalions is a means of causing casualties. From a prisoner taken the enemy

learns what battalions were present at a given fight; he adds up the numbers reported killed and wounded and ascertains what the fight cost the enemy and, in turn, the effect of the fire from his side. But the British public demanded to see the casualty lists and the British press were allowed to gratify the desire. They appeared in the newspapers, of course, days after the nearest relative of the dead or wounded man had received official notification from the War Office.

Officers' letters from the front, so freely published earlier in the war, amazed experienced correspondents by their unconscious indiscretions. The line officer who had been in a fight told all that he saw. Twenty officers doing the same along a stretch of front and the jig-saw experts, plus what information they had from spies, were in clover. Editors said: "But these men are officers. They ought to know when they are imparting military secrets."

Alas, they do not know! It is not to be expected that they should. Their business is to fight; the business of other experts is to safeguard information. For a long time the British army kept correspondents from the front on the principle that the business of a correspondent must be to tell what ought not to be told. Yet they were to learn that the accredited correspondent, an expert at his profession, working in harmony with the experts of the staff, let no military secrets pass.

At our mess we get the Berlin dailies promptly. Soon after the Germans are reading the war correspondence from their own front we are reading it, and laughing at jokes in their comic papers and at cartoons which exhibit John Bull as a stricken old ogre and Britannia who Rules the Waves with the corners of

her mouth drawn down to the bottom of her chin, as she sees the havoc that von Tirpitz is making with submarines which do not stop us from receiving our German jokes regularly across the Channel.

Doubtless the German messes get their *Punch* and the London illustrated weeklies regularly. In the time that it took the English daily with the account of the action seen from the church tower to reach Berlin and the news to be wired to the front, the German guns made use of the information. Neutral little Holland is the telltale of both sides; the ally and the enemy of all intelligence corps. Scores of experts in jig-saw puzzles on both sides seize every scrap of information and piece them together. Each time that one gets a bit from a newspaper he is for a sharper press censorship on his side and a more liberal one on the other.

We six correspondents have our insignia, as must every one who is free to move along the lines. By a glance you may tell everybody's branch and rank in that complicated and disciplined world, where no man acts for himself, but always on some one else's orders.

"Don't you know who they are? They are the correspondents," I heard a soldier say. "D. Chron., that's the *Daily Chronicle;* M. Post, that's the *Morning Post;* D. Mail, that's the *Daily Mail.* There's one with U. S. A. What paper is that?"

"It ain't a paper," said another. "It's the States — he's a Yank!" The War Office put it on the American cousin's arm, and wherever it goes it seems welcome. It may puzzle the gunners when the American says, "That was a peach of a shot, right across the pan!" or the infantry when he says, "It cuts no ice!" and there is no ice visible in Flanders; he speaks

about typhoid to the medical corps which calls it enteric; and "fly-swatting" is a new word to the sanitarians, who are none the less busily engaged in that noble art. Lessons for the British in the "American language" while you wait! In return, the American is learning what a "stout-hearted thruster" and other phrases mean in the Simon-pure English.

The correspondents are the spoiled spectators of the army's work; the itinerants of the road of war. Nobody sees so much as we, because we have nothing to do but to see. An officer looking at the towers of Ypres cathedral, a mile away from the trench where he was, said: "No, I've never been in Ypres. Our regiment has not been stationed in that part of the line."

We have sampled all the trenches; we have studied the ruins of Ypres with an archæologist's eye; we know the names of the estaminets of the villages, from "The Good Farmer" to "The Harvester's Rest" and "The Good Cousin," not to mention "The Omnibus Stop" on the Cassell Hill. Madame who keeps the hotel in the G. H. Q. town knows me so well that we wave hands to each other as I pass the door; and the clerks in a certain shop have learned that the American likes his fruit raw, instead of stewed in the English fashion, and plenty of it, especially if it comes from the South out of season, as it does from Florida or California to pampered human beings at home, who, if they could see as much of this war as I have seen, would appreciate what a fortunate lot they are to have not a ribbon of salt water but a broad sea full of it, and the British navy, too, between them and the thing on the other side of the zone of death.

G. H. Q. means General Headquarters, and

B. E. F., which shows the way for your letters from England, means British Expeditionary Force. The high leading, the brains, of the army are theoretically at G. H. Q. That word theoretically is used advisedly in view of opinion at other points. An officer sent from G. H. Q. to command a brigade had not been long out before he began to talk about those confounded one-thing-and-another fellows at G. H. Q. When he was at G. H. Q., he used to talk about those confounded one-thing-and-another fellows who commanded corps, divisions, and brigades at the front. The philosophers of G. H. Q. smiled and the philosophers of the army smiled — it was the old story of the staff and the line; of the main office and the branches. But the line did the most smiling to see the new brigadier getting a taste of his own medicine.

G. H. Q. directs the whole; here every department of all that vast concern which supplies the hundreds of thousands of men and prepares for the other hundreds of thousands is focussed. The symbol of its authority is a red band around the cap, which means that you are a staff officer. No war at G. H. Q., only the driving force of war. It seems as far removed from the front as the New York office of a string of manufacturing plants.

If one follows a red-banded cap into a door he sees other officers and clerks and typewriters, and a sign which says that a department chief has his desk in the drawing-room of a private house — where he has had it for months. Go to one mess and you will hear talk about garbage pails and how to kill flies; to another, about hospitals and clearing stations for the wounded; to another, about barbed wire, sandbags, spades, timber, and galvanised iron — the engineers;

to another, about guns, shells, rifles, bullets, mortars, bombs, bayonets, and high explosives — the ordnance; to another, about jam, bread, bacon, uniforms, iron rations, socks, underclothes, canned goods, fresh beef, and motor trucks — the Army Service Corps; to another, about attacks, counter-attacks, and salients, and about what the others are doing and will have to do — the operations.

The chief of staff drives the eight-horse team. He works sixteen hours a day. So do most of the others. This is how you prove to the line that you have a right to be at G. H. Q. When you get to know G. H. Q. it seems like any other business institution. Many are there who don't want to be there; but they have been found out. They are specialists, who know how to do one thing particularly well and are kept doing it. No use of growling that you would like a "fighting job."

G. H. Q. is the main station on the road of war, which hears the sound of the guns faintly. Beyond is the region of all the activities that it commands, up to the trenches, where all roads end and all efforts consummate. One has seen dreary, flat lands of mud and leafless trees become fair with the spring, the growing harvests reaped, and the leaves begin to fall. Always the factory of war was in the same place; the soldiers billeted in the same villages; the puffs of shrapnel smoke over the same belt of landscape; the ruins of the same villages being pounded by high explosives. Always the sound of guns; always the wastage of life, as passing ambulances, the curtains drawn, speed by, their part swiftly and covertly done. The enormity of the thing holds the imagination; its sure and orderly processes of an organised civilisation

working at destruction win the admiration. There is a thrill in the courage and sacrifice and the drilled readiness of response to orders.

One is under varying spells. To-day he seems in the midst of a fantastic world, whose horror makes it impossible of realisation. To-morrow, as his car takes him along a pleasant by-road among wheat-fields where peasants are working and no soldier is in sight, it is a world of peace, and one thinks that he has mistaken the roar of a train for the distant roar of gun-fire. Again, it seems the most real of worlds, an exclusive man's world, where nothing counts but organised material force, and all those cleanly, well-behaved men in khaki are a part of the permanent population.

One sees the war as a colossal dynamo, where force is perpetual like the energy of the sun. The war is going on forever. The reaper cuts the harvest, but another harvest comes. War feeds on itself, renews itself. Live men replace the dead. There seems no end to supplies of men. The pounding of the guns, like the roar of Niagara, becomes eternal. Nothing can stop it.

# XV

## TRENCHES IN WINTER

A trench must be "experienced"— Appearance of the trench — A trench periscope —"One hundred and fifty yards away"— Imagination at work — The dead wall opposite — Trench realism — A genuine officer — A night excursion — General Mud — The German flares — A house in a trench wall — Oozing walls — "A ditch in the mud"— Discovered by a searchlight — Suspense — Arrival of supplies — The relief and cleanliness.

THE difference between trench warfare in winter and in summer is that between sleeping on the lawn in March and in July. It was in the mud and winds of March that I first saw the British front. The winds were much like the seasonal winds at home; but the Flanders mud is like no other mud, in the judgment of the British soldier. It is mixed with glue. When I returned to the front in June for a longer stay, the mud had become clouds of dust that trailed behind the automobile.

In March my eagerness to see a trench was that of one from the Western prairies to get his first glimpse of the ocean. Once I might go into a trench as often as I pleased I became "fed up" with trenches, as the British say. They did not mean much more than an alley or a railroad cut. One came to think of the average peaceful trench as a ditch where some men were eating marmalade and bully beef and looking across a field at some more men who were eating sausage and "K. K." bread, each party taking care that the other did not see him.

Writers have served us trenches in every possible

literary style that censorship will permit. Whoever "tours" one is convinced that none of the descriptions published heretofore has been adequate and writes one of his own which will be final. All agree that it is not like what they thought it was. But, despite all the descriptions, the public still fails to visualise a trench. You do not see a trench with your eyes so much as with your mind and imagination. That long line where all the powers of destruction within man's command are in deadlock has become a symbol for something which cannot be expressed by words. No one has yet really described a shell-burst, or a flash of lightning, or Niagara Falls; and no one will ever describe a trench. He cannot put any one else there. He can only be there himself.

The first time that I looked over a British parapet was in the edge of a wood. Board walks ran across the spongy earth here and there; the doors of little shanties with earth roofs opened on to those streets, which were called Piccadilly and the Strand. I was reminded of a pleasant prospector's camp in Alaska. Only everybody was in uniform and occasionally something whished through the branches of the trees. One looked up to see what it was and where it was going, this stray bullet, without being any wiser.

We passed along one of the walks until we came to a wall of sandbags — simply white bags about three-quarters of the size of an ordinary pillowslip, filled with earth and laid one on top of another like bags of grain. You stood beside a man who had a rifle laid across the top of the pile. Of course, you did not wear a white hat or wave a handkerchief. One does not do that when he plays hide-and-seek.

Or, if you preferred, you might look into a chip of

glass, with your head wholly screened by the wall of sandbags, which got a reflection from another chip of glass above the parapet. This is the trench periscope; the principle of all of them is the same. They have no more variety than the fashions in knives, forks and spoons on the dinner table.

One hundred and fifty yards away across a dead field was another wall of sandbags. The distance is important. It is always stated in all descriptions. One hundred and fifty yards is not much. Only when you get within forty or fifty yards have you something to brag about. Yet three hundred yards may be more dangerous than fifteen, if an artillery "hate" is on.

Look for an hour and all you see is the wall of sandbags. Not even a rabbit runs across that dead space. The situation gets its power of suggestion from the fact that there are Germans behind the other wall — real, live Germans. They are trying to kill the British on our side and we are trying to kill them; and they are as coyly unaccommodating about putting up their heads as we are. The emotion of the situation is in the fact that a sharpshooter might send a shot at your cap; he might smash a periscope; a shell might come. A rifle cracks — that is all. Nearly every one has heard the sound, which is no different at the front than elsewhere. And the sound is the only information you get. It is not so interesting as shooting at a deer, for you can tell whether you hit him or not. The man who fires from a trench is not even certain whether he saw a German or not. He shot at some shadow or object along the crest which might have been a German head.

Thus, one must take the word of those present that

there is any more life behind than in front of the sandbags. However, if you are sceptical you may have conviction by starting to crawl over the top of the British parapet. After dark the soldiers will slip over and bring your body back. It is this something you do not see, this something the imagination visualises, that convinces you that you ought to be considerate enough of posterity to write the real description of a trench. Look for an hour at that wall of sandbags and your imagination sees more and more, while your eye sees only sandbags. What does this war mean to you? There it is; only you can describe what this war means to you.

Many a soldier who has spent months in trenches has not seen a German. I boast that I have seen real Germans through my glasses. They were walking along a road back of their trenches. It was most fascinating. All the Germans I had ever seen in Germany were not half so interesting. I strained my eyes watching those wonderful beings as I might at the first visiting party from Mars to earth. There must have been at least ten out of the Kaiser's millions.

In summer that wood had become a sylvan bower, or a pastoral paradise, or a leafy nook, as you please. The sun played through the branches in a patchwork; flowers bloomed on the dirt roofs of the shanties, and a swallow had a nest — famous swallow! — on one of the parapets. True, it was not on the front parapet; it was on the reserve. The swallow knew what he was about. He was taking a reasonable amount of risk and playing reasonably secure to get a front seat, according to the ethics of the war correspondent. The two walls of sandbags were in the

same place that they had been six months previously. A little patching had been done after some shells had hit the mark, though not many had come.

For this was a quiet corner. Neither side was interested in stirring up the hornets' nest. If a member of Parliament wished to see what trench life was like he was brought here, because it was one of the safest places for a few minutes' look at the sandbags which Mr. Atkins stared at week in and week out. Some Conservatives, however, in the case of Radical members, would have chosen a different kind of trench to show; for example, that one which was suggested to me by the staff officer with the twinkle in his eye in my best day at the front.

In want of an army pass to the front in order to write your own description, then, put up a wall of sandbags in a vacant lot and another one hundred and fifty yards away and fire a rifle occasionally from your wall at the head of a man on the opposite side, who will shoot at yours — and there you are. If you prefer the realistic to the romantic school and wish to appreciate the nature of trench life in winter, find a piece of wet, flat country, dig a ditch seven or eight feet deep and stand in icy water looking across at another ditch, and sleep in a cellar that you have dug in the wall, and you are near understanding what Mr. Atkins has been doing for his country. The ditch should be cut zigzag in and out, like the lines binding the squares of a checker-board; that makes more work and localises the burst of shells.

Of course, the moist walls will be continually falling in and require mending in a drenching, freezing rain of the kind that the Lord visits on all who wage war underground in Flanders. Incidentally, you

must look after the pumps, lest the water rise to your neck. For all the while you are fighting Flanders as well as the Germans.

To carry realism to the limit of the Grand Guignol school, then, arrange some bags of bullets with dynamite charges on a wire, which will do for shrapnel; plant some dynamite in the parapet, which will do for high explosive shells that burst on contact; and sink heavier charges of dynamite under your feet, which will do for mines — and set them off, while you engage some one to toss grenades and bombs at you.

Though scores of officers' letters had given their account of trench life with the vividness of personal experience, I must mention my first trench in Flanders in winter when, with other correspondents, I saw the real thing under the guidance of the commanding officer of that particular section, a slight, wiry man who wore the ribbon of the Victoria Cross, won in another war for helping to "save the guns." He made seeing trenches in the mud seem a pleasure trip. He was the kind who would walk up to his ball as if he knew how to play golf, send out a clean, fair, long drive, and then use his iron as if he knew how to use an iron, without talking about his game on the way around or when he returned to the club-house.

Men could go into danger behind him without realising that they were in danger; they could share hardship without realising that there were any hardships. Such as he put faith and backbone into soldiers by their very manner; and if their professional training equal their talents, when war comes they win victories.

Of course, we had rubber boots, electric torches, and wore British warms, those short, thick coats which accrue a modicum of mud for you to carry besides

what you are carrying on your boots. We walked along a hard road in the dark toward an aurora borealis of German flares, which popped into the sky like Roman candles and burst in circles of light. They seemed to be saying: "Come on! Try to crawl up on us and play us a trick and our eyes will find you and our marksmen will stop you. Come on! We make the night into day, and watching never ceases from our parapet."

Occasional rifle-shots and a machine gun's ter-rut were audible from the direction of the jumping red glare, which stretched right and left as far as the eye could see. We broke off the road into a morass of mud, as one might cross lots when he had lost his way, and plunged on till the commanding officer said, "We go in here!" and we descended into a black chasm in the earth. The wonder was that any ditch could be cut in soil which the rains had turned into syrup. Mud oozed from the sandbags, through the wire netting, and between the wood supports which held the walls in place. It was just as bad over in the German trenches. General Mud laid siege to both armies. The field of battle where he gathered his gay knights was a slough. His tug of war was strife against landslides, rheumatism, pneumonia, and frozen feet.

The soldier tries to kill his adversary; he tries to prevent his adversary from killing him. He is as busy in safeguarding as in taking life. While he breathes, thinks, fights mud, he blesses as well as curses mud. Mother Earth is still unconquerable. In her bosom man still finds security; such security that "dug in" he can defy at a hundred yards' distance rifles that carry death three thousand yards.

She it is that has made the deadlock of the trenches and plastered their occupants with her miry hands.

The C. O. lifted a curtain of bagging as you might lift a hanging over an alcove bookcase, and a young officer, rising from his blankets in his house in the trench-wall to a stooping posture, said that all was quiet. His uniform seemed fleckless. Was it possible that he wore some kind of cloth which shed mud spatters? He was another of the type of Captain P——, my host at Neuve Chapelle; a type formed on the type of seniors such as his C. O. Unanalysable this quality, but there is something distinguished about it and delightfully appealing. A man who can be the same in a trench in Flanders in midwinter as in a drawing-room has my admiration. They never lose their manner, these English officers. They carry it into the charge and back in the ambulance with them to England, where they wish nothing so much as that their friends will " cut out the hero stuff," as our own officers say.

In other dank cellars soldiers who were off guard were lying or sitting. The radiance of the flares lighted the profiles of those on guard, whose faces were half hidden by coat collars or ear-flaps — imperturbable, silent, marooned and marooning, watchful and fearless. The thing had to be done and they were doing it; and they were going to keep on doing it.

There was nothing dry in that trench, unless it was the bowl of a man's pipe. There were not even any braziers. In your nostrils was the odour of the soil of Flanders, cultivated by many generations through many wars. As night wore on the sky was brightened by cold, winter stars and their soft light became

noticeable between the disagreeable flashes of the flares.

We walked on and on. It was like walking in a winding ditch; that was all. The same kind of walls at every turn; the same kind of dim figures in saturated, heavy army overcoats. Slipping off the board walk into the ooze, one was thrown against the mud wall as his foot sank. Then he held fast to his boot straps lest the boot remain in the mud while his foot came out. Only the C. O. never slipped. He knew how to tour trenches. The others were as clumsy beside him as if they were trying to walk a tight rope.

"Good night!" he said to each group of men as he passed, with the cheer of one who brings a confident spirit to vigils in the mud and with that note of affection of the commander who has learned to love his men by the token of ordeals when he saw them hold fast against odds.

"Good night, sir!" they answered; and in their tone was something which you liked to hear — a finer tribute to the C. O. than medals which kings can bestow. It was affection and trust. They were ready to follow him, for they knew that he knew how to lead. I was not surprised when I heard of his promotion, later. I shall not be surprised when I hear of it again. For he had brain and heart and the gift of command.

"Shall we go on or shall we go back?" he asked when we had gone about a mile. "Have you had enough?"

We had, without a dissenting voice. A ditch in the mud — that was all, no matter how much farther we went. So we passed out of the trench into a soapy,

slippery mud which had been ploughed ground in the autumn, now become lathery with the beat of men's steps. Our party became separated, when some foundered and tried to hoist themselves with both boot straps at once. The C. O. called out in order to locate us in the darkness, and the voice of an officer in the trenches cut in: "Keep still! The Germans are only a hundred yards away!"

"Sorry!" whispered the C. O. "I ought to have known better."

Then one of the German searchlights that had been swinging its stream of light across the paths of the flares lay its fierce, comet eye on us, glistening on the froth-streaked mud and showing each mud-splashed figure in heavy coat in weird silhouette.

"Stand still!"

That is the order whenever searchlights come spying in your direction. So we stood still in the mud, looking at one another and wondering. It was the one tense second of the night, which lifted our thoughts out of the mud with the elation of risk. That searchlight was the eye of death looking for a target. With the first crack of a bullet we should have known that we were discovered and that it was no longer good tactics to stand still. We should have dropped on all fours into the porridge. The searchlight swept on. Perhaps Hans at the machine gun was nodding or perhaps he did not think us worth while. Either supposition was equally agreeable to us.

We kept moving our mud-poulticed feet forward, with the flares at our backs, till we came to a road where we saw dimly a silent company of soldiers drawn up and behind them the supplies for the trench.

Through the mud and under cover of darkness every bit of barbed wire, every board, every ounce of food, must go up to the moles in the ditch. The searchlights and the flares and the machine guns waited for the relief. They must be fooled. But in this operation most of the casualties in the average trenches, both British and German, occurred. Without a chance to strike back, the soldier was shot at by an assassin in the night.

When the men who had been serving their turn of duty in the trenches came out, a magnet drew their weary steps — cleanliness. They thought of nothing except soap and water. For a week they need not fight mud or Germans or parasites, which, like General Mud, waged war against both British and Germans. Standing on the slats of the concrete floor of a factory, they peeled off the filthy, saturated outer skin of clothing with its hideous, crawling inhabitants and, naked, leapt into great, steaming vats, where they scrubbed and gurgled and gurgled and scrubbed. When they sprang out to apply the towels, they were men with the feel of new bodies in another world.

Waiting for them were clean clothes, which had been boiled and disinfected; and waiting, too, was the shelter of their billets in the houses of French towns and villages, and rest and food and food and rest, and newspapers and tobacco and gossip — but chiefly rest and the joy of lethargy as tissue was rebuilt after the first long sleep, often twelve hours at a stretch. They knew all the sensations of physical man, man battling with nature, in contrasts of exhaustion and danger and recuperation and security, as the pendulum swung slowly back from fatigue to the glow of strength.

Those who came out of the trenches quite "done up," Colonel Bate, Irish and genial, fatherly and not lean, claimed for his own. After the washing they lay on cots under a glass roof, and they might play dominoes and read the papers when they were well enough to sit up. They had the food which Colonel Bate knew was good for them, just as well as he knew what was deadly for the inhabitants whom they brought into that isolated room which every man must pass through before he was admitted to the full radiance of the colonel's curative smile. When they were able to return to the trenches, each was written down as one unit more in the colonel's weekly statistical reports. In summer he entertained *al fresco* in an open air camp.

# XVI

## IN NEUVE CHAPELLE

British advance — The human stone wall moves — Neuve Chapelle "on the map" — The travelled British army — A demolished trench — Stray bullets — The intelligence system — A captured spy — Old friends — Power of the British artillery — Front line breastworks — Business-like readiness — A cosy house — A ticklish walk — Glowing braziers — "How do they feel in the States?" — The Rhine or Berlin? — The passing of the "Soldiers Three" — The modern Tommy — Capturing a helmet.

TYPICAL of many others, this quiet village in a flat country of rich farming land, with a church, a school, a post-office, and stores where the farmers could buy a pound of sugar or a spool of thread, employ a notary, or get a pair of shoes cobbled or a horse shod, without having to go to the neighbouring town of Béthune, Neuve Chapelle became famous only after it had ceased to exist — unless a village remains a village after it has been reduced to its original elements by shell-fire.

It was the scene of one of those actions in the long siege line which have the dignity of a battle; the losses on either side, about sixteen thousand, were two-thirds of those at Waterloo or Gettysburg. Here the British after the long winter's stalemate in the mud, where they stuck when the exhausted Germans could press them no farther, took the offensive, with the sap of spring rising in their veins.

The guns blazed the way and the infantry charged in the path of the guns' destruction; and they kept

on while the shield of shell-fire held. When it left an opening for the German machine guns through its curtain and the German guns visited on the British what their guns had been visiting on the Germans, the British stopped. A lesson was learned; a principle established. A gain was made, if no goal were reached.

The human stone wall had moved. It had broken some barriers and come to rest before others, again to become a stone wall. But it knew that the thing could be done with guns and shells enough — and only with enough. This means a good deal when you have been under dog for a long time. Months were to pass waiting for enough shells and guns, with many little actions and their steady drain of life, while every one looked back to Neuve Chapelle as a landmark. It was something definite for a man to say that he had been wounded at Neuve Chapelle and quite indefinite to say that he had been wounded in the course of the day's work in the trenches.

No one might see the battle in that sea of mud. He might as well have looked at the smoke of Vesuvius with an idea of learning what was going on inside of the crater. I make no further attempt at describing it. My view came after the battle was over and the cauldron was still steaming.

Though in March, 1914, one would hardly have given Neuve Chapelle, intact and peaceful, a passing glance from an automobile, in March, 1915, Neuve Chapelle in ruins was the one town in Europe which I most wanted to see. Correspondents had not then established themselves. The staff officer whom I asked if I might spend a night in the new British line was a cautious man. He bade me sign a paper free-

ing the British army from any responsibility. Judging by the general attitude of the Staff, one could hardly take the request seriously. One correspondent less ought to please any Staff; but he said that he had an affection for the regulars and knew that there were always plenty of recruits to take their places without resorting to conscription. The real responsibility was with the Germans. He suggested that I might go out to the German trenches and see if I could obtain a paper from them. He thought if I were quick about it I might get at least a yard in front of the British parapet in daylight. His sense of humour I had recognised when we had met in Bulgaria.

Any traveller is bound to meet men whom he has met before in the travelled British army. At the brigade headquarters town, which, as one of the officers said, proved that bricks and mortar can float in mud, the face of the brigadier seemed familiar to me. I found that I had met him in Shanghai in the Boxer campaign, when he had come across a riotous China from India on one of those journeys in remote Asia which British officers are fond of making. He was "all there," whether dealing with a mob of Orientals or with Germans in the trenches. I made myself at home in the parlour of the private house occupied by himself and staff, while he went on with his work. No flag outside the house; no sign that it was Headquarters. An automobile stopped in front only long enough for an officer to enter it or alight from it. Brigade headquarters is precisely the target that German aeroplanes or spies like to locate for their guns.

"Are you ready? Have you your rubber boots?" the brigadier asked a few minutes later, as he put his

head in at the parlour door. It would not do to approach the trenches until after dark. Of course, I had rubber boots. One might as well try to go to sea without a boat as to trenches without rubber boots in winter. "I'll take my constitutional," he added; "the trouble with this kind of war is that you get no exercise."

He was a small man, but how he could walk! I began to understand why the Boxers could not catch him. He turned back after we had gone a mile or more and one of his staff went on with me to a point where, just at dusk, I was turned over to another pilot, an aide from battalion headquarters, and we set out across sodden fields that had yielded beet root in the last harvest, taking care not to step in shell-holes. Dusk settled into darkness. No human being was in sight except ourselves.

"There's the first line of German trenches before the attack," said my companion. "Our guns got fairly on them." Dimly I saw what seemed like a huge, long, irregular furrow of earth which had been torn almost out of the shape of a trench by British shells. "There was no living in it when the guns began all together. The only thing to do was to get out."

Around us was utter silence, where the hell of thunders and destruction by the artillery had raged during the battle. Then a spent or ricochet bullet swept overhead, with the whistle of complaint of spent bullets at having travelled far without hitting any object. It had gone high over the British trenches; it had carried the full range; and the chance of its hitting any one was ridiculously small. But the nearer you get to the trenches, the more likely these

strays are to find a victim. "Hit by a stray bullet!" is a very common saying at the front.

At last we felt the solidity of a paved road under our feet, and following this we came to a peasant's cottage. Inside, two soldiers were sitting beside telephone and telegraph instruments, behind a window stuffed with sandbags. On our way across the fields we had stepped on wires laid on the ground; we had stooped to avoid wires stretched on poles — the wires that form the web of the army's intelligence.

Of course, no two units of communication are dependent on one wire. There is always a duplicate. If one is broken it is immediately repaired. The factories spin out wire to talk over and barbed wire for entanglements in front of trenches and weave millions of bags to be filled with sand for breastworks to protect men from bullets. If Sir John French wished, he could talk with Lord Kitchener in London and this battalion headquarters at Neuve Chapelle within the same space of time that a railroad president may speak over the long distance from Chicago to New York and order dinner out in the suburbs.

These two men at the table, their faces tanned by exposure, men in the thirties, had the British regular of long service stamped all over them. War was an old story to them; and an old story, too, laying signal wires under fire.

"We're very comfortable," said one. "No danger from stray bullets or from shrapnel; but if one of the Jack Johnsons come in, why, there's no more cottage and no more argument between you and me. We're dead and maybe buried, or maybe scattered over the landscape, along with the broken pieces of the roof."

A soldier was on guard with bayonet fixed inside that little room, which had passageway to the cellar past the table, among straw beds. This seemed rather peculiar. The reason lay on one of the beds in a private's khaki. He had come into this battalion's trenches from our front and said that he belonged to the D—— regiment and had been out on patrol and lost his way.

It was two miles to that regiment and two miles is a long distance to stray between two lines of trenches so close together, when at any point in your own line you will find friends. It was possible that this fellow's real name was Hans Schmidt, who had learned cockney English in childhood in London, and in a dead British private's uniform had come into the British trenches to get information to which he was anything but welcome. He was to be sent under guard to the D—— regiment for identification; and if he were found to be a Hans and not a Tommy — well, though he had tried a very stupid dodge he must have known what to expect when he was found out, if his officers had properly trained him in German rules of war.

I had a glimpse of him in the candlelight before stooping to feel my way down three or four narrow steps to the cellar, where the farmer ordinarily kept potatoes and vegetables. There were straw beds around the walls here, too. The major commanding the battalion rose from his seat at a table on which were some cutlery, a jam pot, tobacco, pipes, a newspaper or two, and army telegraph forms and maps.

If the hosts of mansions could only make their hospitality as simple as the major's, there would be less affectation in the world. He introduced me to an offi-

cer sitting on the other side of the table and to one lying in his blankets against the wall, who lifted his head and blinked and said that he was very glad to see me.

It is a small world, for China cropped up here, as it had at brigade headquarters. The major had been in garrison at Peking when the war began. If my shipmate on a long battleship cruise, Lt.-Col. Dion Williams, U.S.M.C., reads this out in Peking, let it tell him that the major is just as urbane in the cellar of a second-rate farmhouse on the outskirts of Neuve Chapelle as he would be in a corner of the Peking Club.

"How is it? Paining you any?" asked the major of Captain P——, on the other side of the table.

"No account. It's quite all right," said the captain.

"Using the sling?"

"Part of the time. Hardly need it, though."

Captain P—— was one of those men whose eyes are always smiling; who seems, wherever he is, to be glad that he is not in a worse place; who goes right on smiling at the mud in the trenches and bullets and shells and death. They are not emotional, the British, perhaps, but they are given to cheeriness, if not to laughter, and they have a way of smiling at times when smiles are much needed. The smile is more often found at the front than back at Headquarters; or perhaps it is more noticeable there.

"You see, he got a bullet through the arm yesterday," the major explained. "He was reported wounded, but remained on duty in the trench." I saw that the captain would rather not have publicity given to such an ordinary incident. He did not see why

people should talk about his arm. "You are to go with him into the trench for the night," the major added; and I thought myself very lucky in my companion.

"Aren't you going to have dinner with us?" the major asked him.

"Why, I had something to eat not very long ago," said Captain P——. One was not sure whether he had or not.

"There's plenty," said the major.

"In that event, I don't see why I shouldn't eat when I have a chance," the captain returned; which I found was a characteristic trench habit, particularly in winter when exposure to the raw, cold air calls for plenty of body-furnace heat.

We had a ration soup and ration ham and ration prunes and cheese; what Tommy Atkins gets. When we were outside the house and starting for the trench, this captain, with his wounded arm, wanted to carry my knapsack. He seemed to think that refusal was breaking The Hague conventions.

Where we turned off the road, broken finger-points of brick walls in the faint moonlight indicated the site of Neuve Chapelle; other fragments of walls in front of us were the remains of a house; and that broken tree-trunk showed what a big shell can do. The trunk, a good eighteen inches in diameter, had not only been cut in two by one of the monsters of the new British artillery, but had been carried on for ten feet and left lying solidly in the bed of splinters of the top of the stump. All this had been in the field of that battle of a day, which was as fierce as the fiercest day at Gettysburg and fought within about the same space. Every tree, every square rod of

ground, had been paid for by shells, bullets, and human life.

But now we were near the trenches; or, rather, the breastworks. We are always speaking of the trenches, while not all parts of the line are held by trenches. A trench is dug in the ground; a breastwork is raised from the level of the ground. At some points a trench becomes practically a breastwork, as its wall is raised to get free of the mud and water.

We came into the open and heard the sound of voices and saw a spotty white wall; for some of the sandbags of the new British breastworks still retained their original colour. On the reverse side of this wall rifles were leaning in readiness, their fixed bayonets faintly gleaming in the moonlight. I felt of the edge of one and it was sharp, quite prepared for business. In the surroundings of damp earth and mud-bespattered men, this rifle seemed the cleanest thing of all, meticulously clean, that ready weapon whose well-aimed and telling fire, in obedient and cool hands, was the object of all the drill of the new infantry in England; of all the drill of all infantry. Where pickets watched in the open in the old days before armies met in pitched battle, an occasional soldier now stands with rifle laid on the parapet, watching.

Across a reach of field faintly were made out the white spots of another wall of breastworks, the German, at the edge of a stretch of woods, the Bois du Bies. The British reached these woods in their advance; but, their aeroplanes being unable to spot the fall of shells in the mist, they had to fall back for want of artillery support. Along this line where we stood outside the village they stopped; and to stop is

to set the spades going to begin the defences which, later, had risen to a man's height, and with rifles and machine guns had riddled the German counter-attack.

And the Germans had to go back to the edge of the woods, where they, too, began digging and building their new line. So the enemies were fixed again behind their walls of earth, facing each other across the open, where it was death for any man to expose himself by day.

"Will you have a shot, sir?" one of the sentries asked me.

"At what?"

"Why, at the top of the trench over there, or at anything you see moving," he said.

But I did not think that it was an invitation for a non-combatant to accept. If the bullet went over the top of the trench it had still two thousand yards and more to go, and it might find a target before it died. So, in view of the law of probabilities, no bullet is quite waste.

"Now, which is my house?" asked Captain P——. "I really can't find my own home in the dark."

Behind the breastwork were many little houses three or four feet in height, all of the same pattern, and made of boards and mud. The mud is put on top to keep out shrapnel bullets.

"Here you are, sir!" said a soldier.

Asking me to wait until he made a light, the captain bent over as if he were about to crawl under the top rail of a fence and his head disappeared. After he had put a match to a candle and stuck it on a stick thrust into the wall, I could see the interior of his habitation. A rubber sheet spread on the moist earth served as floor, carpet, mattress, and bed. At a

squeeze there was room for two others besides himself. They did not need any doormat, for when they lay down their feet would be at the door.

"Quite cosy, don't you think?" remarked the captain. He seemed to feel that he had a royal chamber. But, then, he was the kind of man who might sleep in a muddy field under a wagon and regard the shelter of the wagon body as a luxury. "Leave your knapsack here," he continued, "and we'll go and see what is doing along the line."

In other words, after you had left your bag in the host's hall, he suggested a stroll in the village or across the fields. But only to see war would he have asked you to walk in such mud.

"Not quite so loud!" he warned a soldier who was bringing up boards from the rear under cover of darkness. "If the Germans hear they may start firing."

Two other men were piling mud on top of a section of breastwork at an angle to the main line.

"What is that for?" the captain asked.

"They get an enfilade on us here, sir, and Mr. —— (the lieutenant) told me to make this higher."

"That's no good. A bullet will go right through," said the captain. "We'll have to wait until we get more sandbags."

A little farther on we came to an open space, with no protection between us and the Germans. Half a dozen men were piling earth against a staked chicken wire to extend the breastworks. Rather, they were piling mud, and they were besmirched from head to foot. They looked like reeking Neptunes rising from a slough. In the same position in daylight, standing

full height before German rifles at three hundred yards, they would have been shot dead before they could leap to cover.

"How does it go?" asked the captain.

"Very well, sir; though what we need is sandbags."

"We'll have some up to-morrow."

At the moment there was no firing in the vicinity. Faintly I heard the Germans pounding stakes, at work improving their own breastworks.

A British soldier appeared out of the darkness in front.

"We've found two of our men out there with their heads blown off by shells," he said. "Have we permission to go out and bury them, sir?"

"Yes."

They would be as safe as the fellows piling mud against the chicken wire, unless the Germans opened fire. If they did, we could fire on their working party, or in the direction of the sound. For that matter, we knew through our glasses by day the location of any weak places in their breastworks and they knew where ours were. A sort of "after-you-gentlemen-if-you-fire-we-shall" understanding sometimes exists between the foes up to a certain point. Each side understands instinctively the limitation of that point. Too much noise in working; a number of men going out to bury dead or making enough noise to be heard, and the ball begins. A deep, broad ditch filled with water made a break in our line. No doubt a German machine gun was trained on it.

"A little bridging is required here," said the captain. "We'll have it done to-morrow night. The

break is no disadvantage if they attack; in fact, we'd rather like to have them try for it. But it makes movement along the line difficult by day."

When we were across and once more behind the breastworks, he called my attention to some high ground in the rear.

"One of our officers took a short cut across there in daylight," he said. "He was quite exposed and they drew a bead on him from the German trench and got him through the arm. Not a serious hit. It wasn't cricket for any one to go out to bring him in. He realised this and called out to leave him to himself, and crawled to cover on his hands and knees."

I was getting the commonplaces of trench life. Thus far it had been a quiet night and was to remain so. Reddish, flickering swaths of light were thrown across the fields between the trenches by the enemy's Roman candle flares. One tried to estimate how many flares the Germans must use every night from Switzerland to the North Sea.

On our side, the only light was from our braziers. Thomas Atkins has become a patron of braziers made by punching holes in buckets; and so have the Germans. Punch holes in a bucket, start a fire inside, and you have cheer and warmth and light through the long night vigils. Two or three days before we had located a sniper between the lines by seeing him swing his fire pot to make a draft against the embers.

If you have ever sat around a campfire in the forest or on the plains you need be told nothing further. One of the old, glamourous features of war survives in these glowing braziers, spreading their genial rays among the little houses and lighting the faces of the men who stand or squat in encircling groups around

the coals, which dry wet clothes, slake the moisture of a section of earth, make the bayonets against the walls glisten, and reveal the position of a machine gun with its tape ready for firing.

Values are relative, and a brazier in the trenches makes the satisfaction of a steam-heated room in winter very superficial and artificial. You are at home there with Tommy Atkins, regular of an old line English regiment, in his heavy khaki overcoat and solid boots and wool puttees, a sturdy, hardened man of a terrific war. He, the regular, the shilling-a-day policeman of the empire, was still doing the fighting at the front. The new army, which embraces all classes, was not yet in action.

This man and that one were at Mons. This one and that one had been through the whole campaign without once seeing Mother England for whom they were fighting. The affection in which Captain P—— was held extended through his regiment, for we had left his own company behind. At every turn he was asked about his arm.

"You've made a mistake, sir. This isn't a hospital," as one man expressed it. Oh, but the captain was bored with hearing about that arm! If he is wounded again I am sure that he will try to keep the fact a secret.

These veterans could "grouse," as the British call it. Grousing is one of Tommy's privileges. When they got to grousing worst on the retreat from Mons, their officers knew that what they really wanted was to make another stand. They were tired of falling back; they meant to take a rest and fight a while. Their language was yours, the language in which our own laws and schoolbooks are written. They made

the old blood call. For months they had been taking bitter medicine; very bitter for a British soldier. The way they took it will, perhaps, remain a greater tribute than any part they play in future victories.

"How do they feel in the States?" I was asked. "Against us?"

"No. By no means."

"I don't see how they could be!" Tommy exclaimed.

Tommy may not be much on argument as it is developed by the controversial spirit of college professors, but he had said about all there was to say. How can we be? Hardly, after you come to know T. Atkins and his officers and talk English with them around their campfires.

"The Germans are always sending up flares," I remarked. "You send up none. How about it?"

"It cheers them. They're downhearted!" said one of the group. "You wouldn't deny them their fireworks, would you, sir?"

"That shows who is top dog," said another. "They're the ones that are worried."

I had heard of trench exhaustion, trench despair, but there was no sign of it in a regiment that had been through all the hell and mire that the British army had known since the war began. To no one had Neuve Chapelle meant so much as to these common soldiers. It was their first real victory. They were standing on soil won from the Germans.

"We're going to Berlin!" said a big fellow who was standing, palms downward to the fire. "It's settled. We're going to Berlin."

A smaller man with his back against the sandbags disagreed. There was a trench argument.

"No, we're going to the Rhine," he said. "The Russians are going to Berlin." (This was in March, 1915, remember.)

"How can they when they ain't over the Balkans yet?"

"The Carpathians, you mean."

"Well, they're both mountains and the Russians have got to cross them. And there's a place called Cracow in that region. What's the matter of a pair of mountain ranges between you and me, Bill? You're strong on geography, but you fail to follow the campaign."

"The Rhine, I say!"

"It's the Rhine first, but Berlin is what you want to keep your mind on."

Then I asked if they had ever had any doubt that they would reach the Rhine.

"How could we, sir?"

"And how about the Germans. Do you hate them?"

"Hate!" exclaimed the big man. "What good would it do to hate them? No, we don't hate. We get our blood up when we're fighting and when they don't play the game. But hate! Don't you think that's kind of ridiculous, sir?"

"How do they fight?"

"They take a bit of beating, do the *Boches!*"

"So you call them *Boches!*"

"Yes. They don't like that. But sometimes we call them Allemands, which is Germans in French. Oh, we're getting quite French scholars!"

"They're good soldiers. Not many tricks they're not up to. But in my opinion they're overdoing the hate. You can't keep up to your work on hate, sir.

I should think it would be weakening to the mind, too."

"Still, you would like the war over? You'd like to go home?"

They certainly would. Back to the barracks, out of the trenches. They certainly would.

"And call it a draw?"

"Call it a draw, now! Call it a draw, after all we've been through —"

"Spring is coming. The ground will dry up and it will be warm."

"And the going will be good to Berlin, as it was back from Paris in August, we tell the *Boches*."

"Good for the Russians going over the Carpathians, or the Pyrenees, or whatever those mountains are, too. I read they're all covered with snow in winter."

It was good, regular soldier talk, very "homey" to me. As you will observe, I have not elided the h's. Indeed, Tommy has a way of prefixing his h's to the right vowels more frequently than a generation ago. The "Soldiers Three" type has passed. Popular education will have its way and induce better habits. Believing in the old remedy for exhaustion and exposure to cold, the army served out a tot of rum every day to the men. But many of them are teetotalers, these hardy regulars, and not even Mulvaney will think them effeminate when they have seen fighting which makes anything Mulvaney ever saw child's play. So they asked for candy and chocolate, instead of rum.

Some people have said that Tommy has no patriotism. He fights because he is paid and it is his business. That is an insinuation. Tommy doesn't care

for the "hero stuff," or for waving flags and speech-making. Possibly he knows how few Germans that sort of thing kills. His weapons are bullets. To put it cogently, he is fighting because he doesn't want any Kaiser in his.

Is not that what all the speeches in Parliament are about and all the editorials and the recruiting campaign? Is not that what England and France are fighting for? It seems to me that Tommy's is a very practical patriotism, free from cant; and the way that he refuses to hate or to get excited, but sticks to it, must be very irritating to the Germans.

"Would you like a *Boche* helmet for a souvenir, sir?" asked a soldier, who appeared on the outer edge of the group. He was the small, active type, a British soldier with the *élan* of the Frenchman. "There are lots of them out there among the German dead"—the unburied German dead, who fell like grass before the mower in a desperate and futile counter-attack to recover Neuve Chapelle. "I'll have one for you on your way back."

There was no stopping him; he had gone.

"Matty's a devil!" said the big man. "He'll get it, all right. He's equal to reaching over the *Boches'* parapet and picking one off a *Boche's* head!"

As we proceeded on our way, officers came out of the little houses to meet Captain P—— and the stranger civilian. They had to come out, as there was no room to take us inside; and sometimes they talked shop together after I had answered the usual question, "Is America against us?" There seemed to be an idea that we were, possibly because of the prodigious advertising tactics of a minority. But any feeling that we might be did not interfere with their simple cour-

tesy, or lead them to express any bitterness or break into argument.

"How are things going on over your side?"

"Nicely."

"Any shelling?"

"A little this morning. No harm done."

"We cleaned out one bad sniper to-day."

"Ought to have some sandbags up to-night."

"It's a bad place there. They've got a machine gun trained which has quite a sweep. I asked if the artillery shouldn't put in a word, but the general didn't think it worth while."

"You must run across that break. Three or four shots at you every time. We're gradually getting shipshape, though."

Just then a couple of bullets went singing overhead. The group paid no attention to them. If you paid attention to bullets over the parapet you would have no time for anything else. But these bullets have a way of picking off tall officers, who are standing up among their houses. In the course of their talk they happened to mention such an instance, though not with reference to the two bullets I have mentioned.

"Poor S—— did not last long. He had been out only three weeks."

"How is J——? Hit badly?"

"Through the shoulder; not seriously."

"H—— is back. Recovered very quickly."

Normal trench talk, this! A crack which signifies that the bullet has hit — another man down. One grows accustomed to it, and one of this group of officers might be gone to-morrow.

"I have one, sir," said Matty, exhibiting a helmet when we returned past his station. "Bullet went

right through the head and came out the peak!"

It was time that Captain P—— was back to his own command. As we came to his company's line word was just being passed from sentry to sentry:

"Not firing. Patrols going out."

It was midnight now.

"We'll go in the other direction," said Captain P——, when he had learned that there was no news.

This brought us to an Irish regiment. The Irish naturally had something to say.

# XVII

## WITH THE IRISH

The Irish have something to say! — The Irish in America — The misguided Germans — The American's visit an event — Veterans of Mons — Eggs in the trenches! — Irish hospitality — A dum-dum souvenir — A memorable drink — Sixty yards from the Germans — The Germans at work — British discipline, a comparison — A vision of the German dead — German diaries — Pawns of war — A heaven of soap and hot water — In the captain's "house" — Soldier shop talk — Trench appetite — A village literally flailed — Pity the refugees.

HERE, not the Irish Sea lay between the broad *a* and the brogue, but the space between two sentries or between two rifles with bayonets fixed, lying against the wall of the breastworks ready for their owners' hands when called to arms in case of an alarm. One stepped from England into Ireland; and my prediction that the Irish would have something to say was correct. They had; for that matter, there are always individual Irishmen in the English regiments, lest English phlegm should let conversation run short.

The first man who made his presence felt was a good six feet in height, with a heavy moustache, and the ear-pieces of his cap tied under his chin though the night was not cold. He placed himself fairly in front of me in the narrow path back of the breastworks and he looked a cowled and sinister figure in the faint glow from a brazier. I certainly did not want any physical argument with a man of his build.

"Who are you?" he demanded, as stiffly as if I

had broken in at the veranda window with a jimmy.

For the nearer you get to the front, the more you feel that you are in the way. You are a stray extra piece of baggage; a dead human weight. Every one is doing something definite as a part of the machine except yourself; and in your civilian clothes you feel the self-conscious conspicuousness of appearing on a dancing-floor in a dressing-gown.

Captain P—— was a little way back in another passage. I was alone and in a rough tweed suit — a strange figure in that world of khaki and rifles.

"A German spy! That's why I am dressed this way, so as not to excite suspicion," I was going to say, when a call from Captain P—— identified me, and the sentry's attitude changed as suddenly as if the inspector of police had come along and told a patrolman that I might pass through the fire-lines.

"So it's you, is it, right from America?" he said. "I've a sister living at Nashua, New Hampshire, U. S. A., with three brothers in the United States army."

Whether he had or not you can judge as well as I by the twinkle in his eye. He might have had five, and again he might not have one. I was a tenderfoot seeing the trenches.

"It's mesilf that's going to America when me sarvice in the army is up in one year and six months," he continued. "That's some time yet. I'm going if I'm not killed by the Germans. It's a way that they have, or we wouldn't be killing them."

"What are you going to do in America? Enlist in the army?"

"No. I'm looking for a better job. I'm think-

ing I'll be one of your millionaires. Shure, but that would be to me taste."

"What do you think of the Germans?"

"It's little thinking we're doing and more shooting. Now do ye know our opinion of them?"

"Some of the Irish in America are pro-German."

"Now will ye listen to that! Their words come out of their mouths without acquainting their heads and hearts with what they are saying. Did you ever find nine Irishmen on the right side without one doing the talking for the divil for the joy of argument? It's the Irish that would be at home in the German army doing the goose-step and taking orders from the Kaiser, is it not, now?"

"And what about the Germans — are they winning?"

"They started out strong, singing and goose-stepping high, for the Kaiser had told them that if they died for him they could burgle the world, and they thought it a grand idea. Shure, we accommodated them. There's plenty of them dead, and some of them are wondering if, when they're all dead, the Kaiser will have any more of the world than when he started, which makes them sorry for him and they give him another 'Hoch'! 'Tis the nature of them, because they've never been told different."

Not one Irishman was speaking really, but a dozen. They came out of their little houses and dugouts to gather around the brazier; and for every remark I made I received a fusillade in reply. It was an event, an American appearing in that trench in the small hours of the morning.

"I've a brother in Oklahoma!" said one.

"Is he a millionaire yet?" I asked.

"If he is he's keeping it a secret!"

Some of them had been at Mons; a few of them had gone through the whole campaign without a scratch; more had been wounded and returned to the front. I like to ask that question, "Were you at Mons?" and get the answer, "Yes, sir, I was; I was through it all!" without boasting — a Mons veteran need not boast — but in the spirit of pride. To have been at Mons, where that hard-bought retreat of one against five began, will ever be enough glory for English, Scotch, Irish, or Welsh. It is like saying, "I was in Pickett's charge!"

A trench-toughened, battle-toughened old sergeant was sitting in the doorway of his dugout, frying a strip of bacon over one rim of the brazier and making tea over the other. The bacon sizzled with an appetising aroma and a bullet sizzled harmlessly overhead. Behind that wall of sandbags all were perfectly safe, unless a shell came. But who worries about shells? It is like worrying about being struck by lightning when clouds gather in a summer sky.

"It looks like good bacon," I remarked.

"It is that!" said the sergeant. "And the hungrier ye are the better. It's your nose that's telling ye so this minute. I can see that ye're hungry yoursilf!"

"Then you're pretty well fed?"

"Well fed, is it? It's stuffed we are, like the geese that grow the paté what-do-you-call-it? Eating is our pastime. We eat when we've nothing else to do and when we've got to do something. We get eggs up here — a fine man is Lord Kitchener — yes, sir, eggs up here in the trenches!"

When they seemed to think that I was sceptical, he produced some eggs in evidence.

"And if ye'll not have the bacon, ye'll have a drop of tea. Mind, now, while your tongue is trying to be polite, your stomach is calling your tongue a liar!"

Irish hospitality responded to the impulse of a warm Irish heart. Wouldn't I have a souvenir? Out came German bullets and buckles and officers' whistles and helmets and fragments of shells and German diaries.

"It's easy to get them out there where the Germans fell that thick!" I was told. "And will ye look at this and take it home to give your pro-German Irish in America, to show what their friends are shooting at the Irish? I found them mesilf on a dead German."

He passed me a clip of German bullets with the blunt ends instead of the pointed ends out. The change is readily made, for the German bullet is easily pulled out of the cartridge case and the pointed end thrust against the powder. Thus fired, it goes accurately four or five hundred yards, which is more than the average distance between German and British trenches. When it strikes flesh the effect is that of a dum-dum and worse; for the jacket splits into slivers, which spread through the pulpy mass caused by the explosion. A leg or an arm thus hit must almost invariably be amputated. I am not suggesting that this is a regular practice with German soldiers, but it shows what wickedness is in the power of the sinister one.

"But ye'll take the tea," said the sergeant, "with a little rum hot in it. 'Twill take the chill out of your bones."

"What if I haven't a chill in my bones?"

"Maybe it's there without speaking to ye and it will be speaking before an hour longer — or afther ye're home between the sheets with the rheumatiz, and ye'll be saying, 'Why didn't I take that glass?' which I'm holding out to ye this minute, steaming its invitation to be drunk."

Held out by a man who had been at Mons and "through it all"! It was a memorable drink Champagne poured out by a butler at your elbow is insipid beside it. Snatches of brogue followed me from the brazier's glow when I insisted that I must be going.

Now our breastworks took a turn and we were approaching closer to the German breastworks. Both lines remained where they had "dug in" after the counter-attacks which had followed the battle had been checked. Ground is too precious in this siege warfare to yield a foot. Soldiers become misers of soil. Where the flood is checked there you build your dam against another flood.

"We are within about sixty yards of the Germans," said Captain P——, at length, after we had gone in and out of the traverses and left the braziers well behind.

Between the spotty, whitish wall of German sandbags, quite distinct in the moonlight, and our parapet were two mounds of sandbags about twenty feet apart. Snug behind one was a German and behind the other an Irishman, both listening. They were within easy bombing range, but the homicidal advantage of position of either resulted in a truce. Sixty yards! Pace it off. It is not far. In other places the enemies have been as close as five yards — only a wall of earth

between them. Where a bombing operation ends in an attack, a German is naturally on one side of a traverse and a Briton on the other.

The Germans were as busy as beavers dam building. They had a lot of work to do before they had their new defences right. We heard them driving stakes and spading; we heard their voices with snatches of sentences intelligible and occasionally the energetic, shouted, guttural commands of their officers. All through that night I never heard a British officer speak above a conversational tone. The orders were definite enough, but given with a certain companionable kindliness. I have spoken of the genuine affection which his men showed for Captain P——, and I was beginning to appreciate that it was not a particular instance.

"What if you should shout at Tommy in the German fashion?" I asked.

"He wouldn't have it; he'd get rebellious," was the reply. "No, you mustn't yell at Tommy. He's a little temperamental about some things and he will not be treated as if he were just a human machine."

Yet no one will question the discipline of the British soldier. Discipline means that the officer knows his men, and British discipline, which bears a retreat like that from Mons, requires that the man likes to follow his officers, believes in his officers, loves his officers. Each army and each people to its own ways.

Sixty yards! And the dead between the trenches and death lurking ready at a trigger's pull should life show itself! When daylight comes the British sing out their "Good morning, Germans!" and the Germans answer, "Good morning, British!" without adding, "We hope to kill some of you to-day!"

Ragging banter and jest and worse than jest and grim defiance are exchanged between the trenches when they are within such easy hearing distance of each other; but always from a safe position behind the parapet which the adversaries squint across through their periscopes. The thing was ridiculous.

At the gibe business the German is, perhaps, better than the Briton. Early in the evening a regiment on our right broke into a busy fusillade at some fancied movement of the enemy. In trench talk, that is getting "jumpy." The Germans in front roared out their contempt in a chorus of guying laughter. Toward morning, these same Germans also became "jumpy" and began tearing the air with bullets, firing against nothing but the blackness of night. Tommy Atkins only made some characteristic comments; for he is a quiet fellow, except when he is played on the music hall stage. Possibly he feels the inconsistency of laughter when you are killing human beings; for, as his officers say, he is temperamental and never goes to the trouble of analysing his emotions. A very real person and a good deal of a philosopher is Mr. Atkins, Britain's professional fighting man, who was the only kind of fighting man she had ready for the war.

Any small boy who had never had enough fireworks in his life might be given a job in the German trenches, with the privilege of firing flares till he fell asleep from exhaustion. All night they were going, with the regularity of clockwork. The only ones sent up from our side that night were shot in order that I might get a better view of the German dead.

You know how water lies in the low places on the ground after a heavy rain. Well, the patches of dead were like that, and dark in the spots where they were

very thick — dark as with the darkness of deeper water. There were also irregular tongues of dead and scattered dead, with arms outstretched or under them as they fell, and faces white even in the reddish glare of the rockets and turned toward you in the charge that failed under the withering blasts of machine guns, ripping out two or three hundred shots a minute, and well-aimed rifle bullets, each bullet getting its man. Threatening that charge would have seemed to a recruit, but measured and calculated in certainty of failure in the minds of veteran defenders, who knew that the wheat could not stand before their mowers. Man's flesh is soft and a bullet is hard and travels fast.

One bit of satire which Tommy sent across the field covered with its burden of slaughter to the Germans who are given to song, ought to have gone home. It was: "Why don't you stop singing and bury your dead?" But the Germans, having given no armistice in other times when British dead lay before the trenches, asked for none here. The dead were nearer to the British than to the Germans. The discomfort would be in British and not German nostrils. And the dead cannot fight; they can help no more to win victory for the Fatherland. And the time is A. D., 1915. Two or three thousand German dead altogether, perhaps — not many out of the Kaiser's millions. Yet they seemed a great many to one who saw them lying there.

We stopped to read by the light of a brazier some German soldiers' diaries that the Irishmen had. They were cheap little books, bought for a few cents, each one telling the dead man's story and revealing the monotony of a soldier's existence in Europe to-day. These pawns of war had been marched here and there,

they never knew why. The last notes were when orders came entraining them. They did not know that they were to be sent out of those woods yonder to recover Neuve Chapelle — out of those woods in the test of all their drill and waiting.

A Bavarian officer — for these were Bavarians — actually rode in that charge. He must have worked himself up to a strangely exalted optimism and contempt of British fire. Or was it that he, too, did not know what he was going against? that only the German general knew? Neither he nor his horse lasted long; not more than a dozen seconds. The thing was so splendidly foolhardy that in some little war it might have become the saga of a regiment, the subject of ballads and paintings. In this war it was an incident heralded for a day in one command and forgotten the next.

"Good night!" called the Irish.

"Good night and good luck!"

"Tell them in America that the Irish are still fighting!"

"Good luck, and may your travelling be aisy; but if ye trip, may ye fall into a gold mine!"

We were back with the British regulars; and here, also, many of the men remained up around the braziers. The hours of duty of the few on watch do not take many of the twenty-four hours. One may sleep when he chooses in the little houses behind the breastworks. Night melts into day and day into night in the monotony of mud and sniping rifle-fire. By-and-by it is your turn to go into reserve; your turn to get out of your clothes — for there are no pajamas for officers or men in these "crawls," as they are sometimes called. Boots off is the only undress-

ing; boots off and puttees unloosed, which saves the feet. Yes, by-and-by the march back to the rear, where there are tubs filled with hot water and an outfit of clean clothes awaiting you, and nothing to do but rest and sleep.

"How soon after we leave the trenches may we cheer?" officers have been asked in the dead of winter, when water stood deep over the porous mud and morning found a scale of ice around the legs.

You, nicely testing the temperature of your morning tub; you, satisfied only with faucets of hot and cold water and a mat to stand on — you know nothing about the joy of bathing. Your bath is a mere part of the daily routine of existence. Try the trenches and get itchy with vermin; then you will know that heaven consists of soap and hot water.

No bad odour assails your nostrils wherever you may go in the British lines. Its cleanliness, if nothing else, would make British army comradeship enjoyable. My wonder never ceases how Tommy keeps himself so neat; how he manages to shave every day and get a part, at least, of the mud off his uniform. It makes him feel more as if he were "at home" in barracks.

From the breastworks, Captain P—— and I went for a stroll in the village, or the site of the village, silent except for the occasional singing of a bullet. When we returned he lighted the candle on a stick stuck into the wall of his little earth-roofed house and suggested a nap. It was three o'clock in the morning. Now I could see that my rubber boots had grown so heavy because I was carrying so much of the soil of Northern France. It looked as if I had gout in both feet — the over-bandaged, stage type of gout —

which were encased in large mud poultices. I tried to stamp off the incubus, but it would not go. I tried scraping one foot on the other, and what I scraped off seemed to reattach itself as fast as I could remove it.

"Don't try!" said the captain. "Lie down and pull your boots off in the doorway. Perhaps you will get some sleep before daybreak."

Sleep! Does a débutante go to sleep at her first ball? Sleep in such good company, the company of this captain, who was smiling all the while with his eyes; smiling at his mud house, at the hardships in the trenches, and, I hope, at having a guest, who had been with armies before!

It was the first time that I had been in the trenches all night; the first time, indeed, when I had not been taken into them by an escort in a kind of promenade. On this visit I was in the family. If it is the right kind of a family that is the way to get a good impression. There would be plenty of time to sleep when I returned to London.

So Captain P—— and I lay there talking. One felt the dampness of the earth under his body and the walls exuded moisture. The average cellar was dry by comparison. "You will get your death of cold!" any mother would cry in alarm if her boy were found even sitting on such cold, wet ground. For it was a clammy night of early spring. Yet, peculiarly enough, few men get colds from this exposure. One gets colds from draughts in overheated rooms much oftener. Luckily, it was not raining; it had been raining most of the winter in the flat country of Northern France and Flanders.

"It is very horrible, this kind of warfare," said the captain. He was thinking of the method of it, rather

than of the discomforts. "All war is very horrible, of course." Regular soldiers rarely take any other view. They know war.

"With your wounded arm you might be back in England on leave," I suggested.

"Oh, that arm is all right!" he replied. "This is what I am paid for"—which I had heard regulars say before. "And it is for England!" he added, in his quiet way. "Sometimes I think we should fight better if we officers could hate the Germans," he went on. "The German idea is that you must hate if you are going to fight well. But we can't hate."

Sound views he had about the war; sounder than I have heard from the lips of cabinet ministers. For these regular officers are specialists in war.

"Do you think that we shall starve the Germans out?"

"No. We must win by fighting," he replied. This was in March, 1915. "You know," he went on, taking another tack, "when one gets back to England out of this muck he wants good linen and everything very nice."

"Yes. I've found the same after roughing it," I agreed. "One is most particular that he has every comfort to which civilisation entitles him."

We chatted on. Much of our talk was soldier shop talk, which you will not care to hear. Twice we were interrupted by an outburst of firing, and the captain hurried out to ascertain the reason. Some false alarm had started the rifles speaking from both sides. A fusillade for two or three minutes and the firing died down to silence.

Dawn broke and it was time for me to go; and with daylight, when danger of a night surprise was

over, the captain would have his sleep. I was leaving him to his mud house and his bed on the wet ground without a blanket. It was more important to have sandbags up for the breastworks than to have blankets; and as the men had not yet received theirs, he had none himself.

"It's not fair to the men," he said. "I don't want anything they don't have."

No better food and no better house and no warmer garments! He spoke not in any sense of stated duty, but in the affection of the comradeship of war; the affection born of that imperturbable courage of his soldiers, who had stood a stone wall of cool resolution against German charges when it seemed as if they must go. The glamour of war may have departed, but not the brotherhood of hardship and dangers shared.

What had been a routine night to him had been a great night to me; one of the most memorable of my life.

"I was glad you could come," he said, as I made my adieu, quite as if he were saying adieu to a guest at home in England.

Some of the soldiers called their cheery good-byes; and with a lieutenant to guide me, I set out while the light was still dusky, leaving the comforting parapet to the rear to go into the open, four hundred yards from the Germans. A German, though he could not have seen us distinctly, must have noted something moving. Two of his bullets came rather close before we passed out of his vision among some trees.

In a few minutes I was again entering the peasant's cottage that was battalion headquarters; this time by daylight. Its walls were chipped by bullets that had

come over the breastworks. The major was just getting up from his blankets in the cellar. By this time I had a real trench appetite. Not until after breakfast did it occur to me, with some surprise, that I had not washed my face.

"The food was just as good, wasn't it?" remarked the major. "We get quite used to such breaches of convention. Besides, you had been up all night, so your breakfast might be called your after-the-theatre supper."

With him I went to see what the ruins of Neuve Chapelle looked like by daylight. The destruction was not all the result of one bombardment, for the British had been shelling Neuve Chapelle off and on all winter. Of course, there is the old earthquake comparison. All writers have used it. But it is quite too feeble for Neuve Chapelle. An earthquake merely shakes down houses. The shells had done a good deal more than that. They had crushed the remains of the houses as under the pestle head in a mortar; blown walls into dust; taken bricks from the east side of the house over to the west and thrown them back with another explosion.

Neuve Chapelle had been literally flailed with the high explosive projectiles of the new British artillery, which the British had to make after the war began to compete with what the Germans already had; for poor, lone, wronged, bullied Germany quite unprepared — Austria with her fifty millions does not count — was fighting on the defensive against wicked, aggressive enemies who were fully prepared. This explains why she invaded France and took possession of towns like Neuve Chapelle to defend her poor, unready people from the French, who had been plotting

and planning " the day " when they would conquer the Germans.

Bits of German equipment were mixed with ruins of clocks and family pictures and household utensils. I noticed a bicycle which had been cut in two, its parts separated by twenty feet; one wheel was twisted into a spool of wire, the other simply mashed.

Where was the man who had kept the shop with a few letters of his name still visible on a splintered bit of board? Where the children who had played in the littered square in front of the church, with its steeples and walls piles of stone that had crushed the worshippers' benches? Refugees somewhere back of the British lines, working on the roads if strong enough, helping France any way they could, not murmuring, even smiling, and praying for victory, which would let them return to their homes and daily duties. To their homes!

# XVIII

## WITH THE GUNS

A war of explosions — And machines — Battle-panorama style — Value of surprise — Ever hungry guns — Accurate or blind and groping guns — Demon guns — Balloon observations — Finding the guns — Ingenious concealments — "Funk pits" — Mechanism — Bookkeeping and trigonometry — "Cover!" — The German aeroplane — New howitzers and their crews — The general — A gun specialist — The "hell-for-leather" guns — The "curtain of fire" — In operation — Spotting the targets — How the system works — A chagrined gunner — A bull's eye! — The Germans retort — Horrible fascination of war — A queer "refugee" — "Besides, they are women and children."

It is a war of explosions, from bombs thrown by hand within ten yards of the enemy to shells thrown as far as twenty miles and mines laid under the enemy's trenches; a war of guns, from seventeen-inch down to three-inch and machine guns; a war of machinery, with man still the pre-eminent machine.

Guns mark the limit of the danger zone. Their screaming shells laugh at the sentries at the entrances to towns and at cross-roads who demand passes of all other travellers. Any one who tried to keep out of range of the guns would never get anywhere near the front. It is all a matter of chance, with long odds or short odds, according to the neighbourhood you are in. If shells come, they come without warning and without ceremony. Nobody is afraid of shells and everybody is — at least, I am.

"Gawd! W'at a 'ole!" remarks Mr. Thomas

Atkins casually, at sight of an excavation in the earth made by a thousand-pound projectile.

It is only eighteen years ago that, at the battle of Domoko in the Greco-Turkish war, I saw half a dozen Turkish batteries swing out on the plain of Thessaly, limber up in the open and discharge salvos with black powder, in the good, old, battle-panorama style. One battery of modern field guns unseen would wipe out the lot in five minutes. Only ten years ago, at the battle of Liao-yang, as I watched a cloud of shrapnel smoke sending down steel showers over the little hill of Manjanyama, which sent up showers of earth from shells burst by impact on the ground, a Japanese military attaché remarked:

"There you have a prophecy of what a European war will be like!"

He was right. He knew his business as a military attaché. The voices of the guns along the front seem never silent. In some direction they are always firing. When one night the reports from a certain quarter seemed rather heavy, I asked the reason the next day.

"No, not very heavy. No attack," a division staff officer explained. "The *Boches* had been building a redoubt and we turned on some h. e. s."— meaning high explosive shells.

Night after night, under cover of darkness, the Germans had been labouring on that redoubt, thinking that they were unobserved. They had kept extremely quiet, too, slipping their spades into the earth softly and hammering a nail ever so lightly; and, of course, the redoubt was placed behind a screen of foliage which hid it from the view of the British trenches. Such is the hide-and-seek character of modern war. What the German builders did not know was that a British

aeroplane had been watching them day by day and that the spot was nicely registered on a British gunner's map. On this map it was a certain numbered point. Press a button, as it were, and you ring the bell with a shell at that point. The gunners waited till the house of cards was up before knocking it to pieces.

Surprise is the thing with the guns. A town may go for weeks without getting a single shell. Then it may get a score in ten minutes; or it may be shelled regularly every day for weeks. "They are shelling X again," or, "They have been leaving Z alone for a long time," is a part of the gossip up and down the line. Towns are proud of having escaped altogether and proud of the number and size of the shells received.

"Did you get any?" I asked the division staff officer, who had told me about the session the six-inch howitzers had enjoyed. A common question that, at the front, "Did you get any?" (meaning Germans). A practical question, too. It has nothing to do with the form of play or any bit of sensational fielding; only with the score, with results, with casualties.

"Yes, quite a number," said the officer. "Our observer saw them lying about."

The guns are watching for targets at all hours — the ever hungry, ever ready, murderous, cunning, quick, scientifically calculating, marvellously accurate, and also the guessing, wondering, blind, groping, helpless, guns, which toss their steel messengers over streams, woodlands, and towns, searching for their unseen prey in a wide landscape.

Accurate and murderous they seem when you drop low behind a trench wall or huddle in a dugout as you

hear an approaching scream, and the earth trembles, the air is wracked by a concussion, and the cry of a man a few yards away tells of a hit. Very accurate when still others, sent from muzzles six or seven thousand yards away, fall in that same line of trench! Very accurate when, before an infantry attack, with bursts of shrapnel bullets they cut to bits the barbed-wire entanglements in front of a trench! The power of chaos that they seem to possess when the fighting-trench and the dugouts and all the human warrens which protect the defenders are beaten as flour is kneaded!

Blind and groping they seem when a dozen shells fall harmlessly in a field; when they send their missiles toward objects which may not be worth shooting at; when no one sees where the shells hit and the amount of damage they have done is guesswork; and helpless without the infantry to protect them, the aeroplanes and the observers to see for them.

One thinks of them as demons with subtle intelligence and long reach, their gigantic fists striking here and there at will, without a visible arm behind the blow. An army guards against the blows of an enemy's demons with every kind of cover, every kind of deception, with all resources of scientific ingenuity and invention; and an army guards its own demons in their lairs as preciously as if they were made of some delicate substance which would go up in smoke at a glance from the enemy's eye, instead of having barrels of the strongest steel that can be forged.

Your personal feeling for the demons on your side is in ratio to the amount of hell sent by the enemy's which you have tasted. After you have been scared stiff, while pretending that you were not, by sharing

with Mr. Atkins an accurate bombardment of a trench and are convinced that the next shell is bound to get you, you fall into the attitude of the army. You want to pat the demon on the back and say, "Nice old demon!" and watch him toss a shell three or four miles into the German lines from the end of his fiery tongue. Indeed, nothing so quickly develops interest in the British guns as having the German gunners take too much personal interest in you.

You must have some one to show you the way or you would not find any guns. A man with a dog trained to hunt guns might spend a week on the gun-position area covering ten miles of the front and not locate half the guns. He might miss "Grandmother" and "Sister" and "Betsy" and "Mike" and even "Mister Archibald," who is the only one who does not altogether try to avoid publicity.

When an attack or an artillery bombardment is on and you go to as high ground as possible for a bird's-eye view of battle, all you see is the explosion of the shells; never anything of the guns which are firing. In the distance over the German lines and in the foreground over the British lines is a balloon, shaped like a caterpillar with folded wings — a chrysalis of a caterpillar. Tugging at its moorings, it turns this way and that with the breeze. The speck directly beneath it through the glasses becomes an ordinary balloon basket and other specks attached to a guy rope play the part of the tail of a kite, helping to steady the type of balloon which has taken the place of the old spherical type for observation.

Any one who has been up in a captive spherical balloon knows how difficult it is to keep his glasses focussed on any object, because of the jerking and

pitching and trembling due to the envelope's response to air-movements. The new type partly overcomes this drawback. To shrapnel their thin envelope is as vulnerable as a paper drum-head to a knife; but I have seen them remain up defiantly when shells were bursting within three or four hundred yards, which their commanders seemed to understand was the limit of the German battery's reach. Again, I have seen a shrapnel burst alongside within range; and five minutes later the balloon was down and out of sight. No balloon observer hopes to see the enemy's guns. He is watching for shell-bursts, in order to inform the guns of his side whether or not they are on the target.

Riding along the roads at the front, one may know that there is a battery a stone's throw away only when a blast from a hidden gun-muzzle warns him of its presence. It was wonderful to me that the artillery general who took me gun-seeing knew where his own guns were, let alone the enemy's. I imagine that he could return to a field and locate a four-leafed clover that he had seen on a previous stroll. His dogs of war had become foxes of war, burrowing in places which wise, old father foxes knew were safest from detection. Hereafter, I shall not be surprised to see a muzzle poking its head out of an oven, or from under grandfather's chair or a farm wagon, or up a tree, or in a garret. Think of the last place in the world for emplacing a gun and one may be there; think of the most likely place and one may be there.

You might be walking across the fields and minded to go through a hedge and bump into a black ring of steel with a gun's crew grinning behind it. They would grin because you had given proof of how well their gun was concealed. But they wouldn't grin as

much as they would if they saw the enemy plunking shells into another hedge two hundred yards distant, where the German aeroplane observer thought he had seen a battery and had not.

" I'll show you a big one, first! " said the general.

We left the car at a cottage and walked along a lane. I looked all about the premises and could see only some artillerymen. An officer led me up to a gun-breech; at least, I know a gun-breech when it is one foot from my nose and a soldier has removed its covering. But I shall not tell how that gun was concealed; the method was so audacious that it was entirely successful. The Germans would like to know and we don't want them to know. A pencil-point on their map for identification, and they would send a whirlwind of shells at that gun.

And then?

Would the gun try to fire back? No. Its gunners probably would not know the location of any of the German batteries which had concentrated on their treasure. They would desert the gun. If they did not, they ought to be court-martialed for needlessly risking the precious lives of trained men. They would make for the " funk pits," just as the gunners of any other power would.

The chances are that the gun itself would not be hit bodily by a shell. Fragments might strike it without causing more than an abrasion; for big guns have pretty thick cuticle. When the storm was over, the gunners would move the gun to another hiding-place; which would mean a good deal of work on account of its size.

It is the inability of gun to see gun, and even when seen to knock out gun, which has put an end to the so-

called artillery duel of pitched-battle days, when cannon walloped cannon to keep cannon from walloping the infantry. Now when there is an action, though guns still go after guns if they know where they are, most of the firing is done against trenches and to support trenches and infantry works, or with a view to demoralising the infantry. Concentration of artillery fire will demolish an enemy's trench and let your infantry take possession of the wreckage remaining; but then the enemy's artillery concentrates on your infantry and frequently makes their new habitation untenable.

Noiselessly except for a little click, with chickens clucking in a field near by, the big breech-block which held the shell fast, sending all the power of the explosion out of the muzzle, was swung back and one looked through the shining tube of steel, with its rifling which caught the driving band and gave the shell its rotation and accuracy in its long journey, which would close when, descending at the end of its parabola, its nose struck brick or earth or pavement and it exploded.

Wheels that lift and depress and swing the muzzle, and gadgets with figures on them, and other scales which play between the map and the gadgets, and atmospheric pressure and wind variation, all worked out with the same precision under a French hedge as on board a battleship where the gun-mounting is fast to massive ribs of steel — it seemed a matter of bookkeeping and trigonometry rather than war.

If a shell from this gun were to hit at the corner of Wall Street and Broadway at the noon hour, it would probably kill and wound a hundred men. If it went into the dugout of a support trench it would get every-

body there; but if it went ten yards beyond the trench into the open field it would probably get nobody.

" Cover! " some one exclaimed, while we were looking at the gun; and everybody promptly got under the branches of a tree or a shed. A German aeroplane was cruising in our direction. If the aviator saw a group of men standing about, he might draw conclusions and pass the wireless word to send in some shells at whatever number on the German gunners' map was ours.

These gunners loved their gun; loved it for the power which it could put into a blow under their trained hands; loved it for the care and the labour it had meant for them. It is the way of gunners to love their gun, or they would not be good gunners. Of all the guns I saw that day, I think that two big howitzers meant the most to their masters. These had just arrived. They had been set up only two days. They had not yet fired against the enemy. For many months the gunners had drilled in England, and had tried their " eight-inch hows " out on the target range, and brought them across the Channel, and nursed them along the French roads, and finally set them up in their hidden lair. Now they waited for observers to assist them in registration.

When the general approached there was a call to turn out the guard; but he stopped that. At the front there is an end of the ceremoniousness of the barracks. Military formality disappears. Discipline, as well as other things, is simpler and more real. The men went on with their recess, playing football in a nearby field.

The officers possibly were a trifle diffident and uncertain; they had not yet the veterans' manner. It

was clear that they had done everything required by the text-book of theory — the latest, up-to-date text-book of experience at the front as taught in England. When they showed us how they had stored their stock of shells to be safe from a shot by the enemy, one remarked that the method was according to the latest directions, though there was some difference among military experts on the subject. When there is a difference, what is the beginner to do? An old hand, of course, does it his way until an order makes him do otherwise.

The general had a suggestion about the application of the method. He had little to say, the general, and it all was in the spirit of comradeship and much to the point. Few things escaped his observation. It seems fairly true that one who knows any branch of human endeavour well makes his work appear easy. Once a gunner always a gunner is characteristic of all armies. The general had spent his life with guns. He was a specialist visiting his plant; one of the staff specialists responsible to a corps commander for the work of the guns on a certain section of map, for accuracy and promptness of fire when it was needed in the commander's plans.

If the newcomers put their shells into the target on their first trial they had qualified; and sometimes newcomers shoot quite as well as veterans, which is a surprise to both and the best kind of news for the general who is in charge of an expanding plant. New guns are just beginning to come; England is only beginning to make war. It takes time to make a gun and time to train men to fire it. The war will be won by gunners and infantry that knew nothing of guns or drill when the war began.

" Here are some who have been in France from the first," said the general, when we came to a battery of field-guns; of the eighteen-pounders, the fellows you see behind the galloping horses, the hell-for-leather guns, the guns which bring the gleam of affection into the eyes of men who think of pursuits and covering retreats and the pitched-battle conditions, before armies settled down in trenches and growled and hissed at each other day after day and brought up guns of calibres which we associate with battleships and coast fortifications.

These are called " light stuff " and " whiz-bangs " now, in army parlance. They throw an eighteen-pound shell which carries three hundred bullets, and so fast that one chases another through the air. There has been so much talk about the need of heavy guns that you might think eighteen-pounders were too small for consideration. Were the German line broken, these are the ones which could follow as rapidly as the engineers could lay bridges for them to cross.

They are the boys who weave the " curtain of fire " which you read about in the French official bulletins as checking an infantry charge; which demolish the barbed-wire entanglements to let an infantry charge get into a trench. If a general wants a shower of bullets over any part of the German line he has only to call up the eighteen-pounders and it is sent as promptly as the pressure of a button brings a pitcher of iced water to a room in a first-class hotel. A veteran eighteen-pounder crew in action is a poem in precision and speed of movement. The gun itself seems to possess intelligence.

There was the finesse of gunners' craft, worthy of

veterans, in the way that these eighteen-pounders were concealed. The Germans had put some shells in the neighbourhood, but without fooling the old hands. They did not change the location of their battery, and their judgment that the shots which came near were chance shots fired at another object was justified. Particularly I should like to mention their " funk pits," which kept them safe from the heaviest shells. For the veterans knew how to take care of themselves; they had an eye to the protection which comes of experience with German high explosives. Their expert knowledge of all the ins and outs of their business had been fought into them for eleven months.

Another field battery, also, I have in mind, placed in an orchard. Which orchard of all the thousands of orchards along the British front the German Staff may guess, if they choose. If German guns fired at all the orchards, one by one, they might locate it — and then again they might not. Besides, this is a peculiar sort of orchard.

It is a characteristic of gunners to be neat and to have an eye for the comeliness of things. These men had a lawn and a garden and tables and chairs. If you are familiar with the tidiness of a retired New England sailor, who regards his porch as a quarter-deck and sallies forth to remove each descending autumn leaf from the grass, then you know how scrupulous they were about litter.

For weeks they had been in the same position, unseen by German aeroplanes. They had daily baths; they did their week's washing, taking care not to hang it where it would be visible from the sky. Every day they received London papers and letters from

home. When they were needed to help in making war, all they had to do was to slip a shell in the breech and send it with their compliments to the Germans. They were camping out at His Majesty's expense in the pleasant land of France in the joyous summer time; and on the roof of sods over their guns were pots of flowers, undisturbed by blasts from the gun-muzzles.

It was when leaving another battery that, out of the tail of my eye, I caught a lurid flash through a hedge, followed by the sharp, ear-piercing crack that comes from being in line with a gun-muzzle when a shot is fired. We followed a path which took us to the rear of the report, where, through undergrowth, we stepped among the busy groups around the breeches of some guns of one of the larger calibres.

An order for some " heavy stuff " at a certain point on the map was being filled. Sturdy men were moving in a pantomime under the shade of a willow tree, each doing exactly his part in a process that seemed as simple as opening a cupboard door, slipping in a package of concentrated destruction, and closing the door again. All that detail of range-finding and mathematical adjustment of aim at the unseen target which takes so long to explain was applied as automatically as an adding-machine adds up a column of figures. Everybody was as practice-perfect in his part as performers who have made hundreds of appearances in the same act on the stage.

All ready, the word given, a crack, and through the air in front you saw a wingless, black object rising in a curve against the soft blue sky, which it seemed to sweep with a sound something like the escape of water through a break in the garden hose, multiplied by

ten, rising to its zenith and then descending till it passed out of sight behind a green bank of foliage on the horizon.

After the scream had been lost to the ear you heard the faint, thudding boom of an explosion from the burst of that conical piece of steel which you had seen slipped into the breech. This was the gunners' part in chess-board war, where the moves are made over signal wires, while the infantry endure the explosions in their trenches and fight in their charges in the traverses of the trenches at as close quarters as in the days of the cave-dwellers.

There was no stopping work when the general came, of course. It would have been the same had Lord Kitchener been present. The battery commander expressed his regret that he could not show me his guns without any sense of irony; meaning that he was sorry he was too busy to tell me more about his battery. In about the time that it took a telegraph key to click after each one of those distant bursts, he knew whether or not the shot was on the target and what variation of degree to make in the next if it were not; or if the word came to shift the point of aim a little, when you are trying to shake the enemy up here and there along a certain length of trench.

At another wire-end some one was spotting the bursts. Perhaps he was in the kind of place where I once found an observer, who was sitting upon a cushion looking out through a chink broken in a wall, with a signal corps operator near by. It was a small chink, just large enough to allow the lens of a pair of glasses or a telescope a range of vision; and even then I was given certain warnings before the cover over the chink was removed, though there could not have been

any German in uniform nearer than four thousand yards. But there may be spies within your own lines, looking for such holes.

From this post I could make out the German and the British trenches in muddy white lines of sandbags running snake-like across the fields, and the officer identified points on the map to me. Every tree and hedge and ditch in the panorama were graven on his mind; all had language for him. His work was engrossing. It had risk, too; there was no telling when a shell might lift him off the cushion and provide a hole for his remains. If he were shelled, the observer would go to a funk pit, as the gunners do, until the storm had passed; and then he would move on with his cushion and his telegraph instrument and make a hole in another wall, if he did not find a tree or some other eminence which suited his taste better. Meanwhile, he was not the only observer in that section. There were others nearer the trenches, perhaps actually in the trenches. The two armies, seeming chained to their trenches, are set with veiled eyes at the end of wires; veiled eyes trying to locate the other's eyes, the other's guns and troops, and the least movement which indicates any attempt to gain an advantage.

"Gunnery is navigation, dead reckoning, with the spotting observer the sun by which you correct your reckoning," said one of the artillery officers.

Firing enough one had seen — landscape bathed in smoke and dust and reverberating with explosions; but all as a spectacle from the orchestra seat, not too close at hand for comfort. This time I was to see the guns fire and then I was to see the results of the firing in detail. Both can rarely be seen at the same time. It was not show firing, this that we watched from an ob-

serving station, but part of the day's work for the guns and the general. First, the map; "here and there," as an officer's finger pointed; and then one looked across the fields, green and brown and golden with summer crops.

Item I. The Germans were fortifying a certain point on a certain farm. We were going to put some "heavy stuff" in there and some "light stuff," too. The burst of our shells could be located in relation to a certain tree.

Item II. Our planes thought that the Germans had a wireless station in a certain building. "Heavy stuff" exclusively for this.

No enemy's wireless station ought to be enjoying serene summer weather without interruption; and no German working party ought to be allowed to build redoubts within range of our guns without a break in the monotony of their drudgery.

Six lyddites were the order for the wireless station; six high explosives which burst on contact and make a hole in the earth large enough for a grave for the Kaiser and all his field marshals. Frequently, not only the number of shells to be fired, but also the intervals between them is given by the artillery commander, as a part of his plan in his understanding of the object to be accomplished; and it is quite clear that the system is the same with the Germans.

One side no sooner develops an idea than the other adopts it. By the effect of the enemy's shells you judge what the effect of yours must be. Months of experience have done away with all theory and practice has become much the same with either adversary. For example, let a German or a British airman be winged by anti-aircraft gun-fire and the enemy's guns

instantly loosen up on the point over his own lines, if he regains them, where he is seen to fall. All the soldiers in the neighbourhood are expected to run to his assistance; and, at any rate, you may kill a trained aviator, whose life is a valuable asset on one side of the ledger and whose death an asset on the other. There is no sentiment left in war, you see. It is all killing and avoiding being killed.

By the scream of a shell the practised ear of the artilleryman can tell whether it comes from a gun with a low trajectory or from a howitzer, whose projectile rises higher and falls at a sharper angle which enables it to enter the trenches; and he can even tell approximately the calibre.

A scream sweeping past from our rear, and we knew that this was for the redoubt, as that was to have the first turn. A volume of dust and smoke breaking from the earth short of the redoubt; a second's delay of hearing the engine whistle after the burst of steam in the distance on a winter day, and then the sound of the burst. The next was over. With the third the " heavy stuff " ought to be right on.

But don't forget that there was also an order for some " light stuff," identified as shrapnel by its soft, nimbus-like puff which was scattering bullets as if giving chase to that working party as it hastened to cover. There you had the ugly method of this modern artillery fire: death shot downward from the air and leaping up out of the earth. Unhappily, the third was not on, nor the fourth — not exactly on. Exactly on is the way the British gunners like to fill an order f.o.b., express charges prepaid, for the Germans.

Ten years ago it would have seemed good shooting. It was not very good in the twelfth month of the war;

for war beats the target range in developing accuracy. At five or six or seven or eight thousand yards' range the shells were bursting thirty or forty yards away from where they should.

No, not very good; the general murmured as much. He did not need to say so aloud to the artillery officer responsible for the shooting, who was in touch with his batteries by wire. The officer knew it. He was the high-strung, ambitious sort. You had better not become a gunner unless you are. Any good-enough temperament is ruled off wasting munitions. Red was creeping through the tan from his throat to the roots of his hair. To have this happen in the presence of that quiet-mannered general, after all his efforts to remedy the error in those guns!

But the general was quite human. He was not the "strafing" kind.

"I know those guns have an error!" he said, as he put his hand on the officer's arm. That was all; but that was a good deal to the officer. Evidently, the general not only knew guns; he knew men. The officer had suffered admonition enough from his own injured pride.

Besides, what we did to the supposed wireless station ought to keep any general from being downhearted. Neither guns, nor the powder which sent the big shells on their errand, nor the calculations of the gunner, nor the adjustment of the gadgets, had any error. With the first shot, a great burst of the black smoke of deadly lyddite rose from the target.

"Right on!"

And again and again — right on!

The ugly, spreading, low-hanging, dense cloud was renewed from its heart by successive bursts in the same

place. If the aeroplane's conclusions were right, that wireless station must be very much wireless, now. The only safe discount for the life insurance of the operators was one hundred per cent.

"Here, they are firing more than six!" said the general. "It's always hard to hold gunners down when they are on the target like that."

He spoke as if it would have been difficult for him to resist the temptation himself. The Germans got two extra for full measure. Perhaps those two were waste; perhaps the first two had been enough. Conservation of shells has become a first principle of the artillerists' duty. The number fired by either side in the course of the routine of an average so-called peaceful day is surprising. Economy would be easier if it were harder to slip a shell into a gun-breech. The men in the trenches are always calling for shells. They want a tree or a house which is the hiding-place of a sniper knocked down. The men at the guns would be glad to accommodate them, but the say as to that is with commanders who know the situation.

"The *Boches* will be coming back at us soon, you will see!" said one of the officers at our observation post. "They always do. The other day they chose this particular spot for their target"— which was a good reason why they would not this time, an optimist thought.

Let either side start a bombardment and the other responds. There is a you-hit-me-and-I'll-hit-you character to siege warfare. Gun-fire provokes gun-fire. Neither adversary stays quiet under a blow. It was not long before we heard the whish of German shells passing some distance away.

They say the sport is out of war. Perhaps, but

not its enthralling and horrible fascination. Knowing what the target is, knowing the object of the fire, hearing the scream of the projectile on the way and watching to see if it is to be a hit, when the British are fighting the Germans on the soil of France, has an intensive thrill which is missing to the spectator who looks on at the Home Sports' Club shooting at clay pigeons — which is not in justification of war. It does explain, however, the attraction of gunnery to gunners. One forgets for the instant that men are being killed and mangled. He thinks only of points being scored in a contest which requires all the wit and strength and fortitude of man and all his cunning in the manufacture and control of material.

You want your side to win; in this case, because it is the side of humanity and of that quiet, kindly general and the things that he and the army he represents stand for. The blows which the demons from the British lairs strike are to you the blows of justice; and you are glad when they go home. They are your blows. You have a better reason for keeping an army's artillery secrets than for keeping secret the signals of your Varsity football team, which any one instinctly keeps — the reason of a world cause.

Yet another thing to see — an aeroplane assisting a battery by spotting the fall of its shells, which is engrossing, too, and amazingly simple. Of course, this battery was proud of its method of concealment. Each battery commander will tell you that one of the British planes has flown very low, as a test, without being able to locate his battery. If the plane does locate it, there is more work due in "make-up" to complete the disguise. Competition among batteries is as keen as among battleships of the North Atlantic.

Situation favoured this battery, which was Canadian. It was as nicely at home as a first-class Adirondack camp. At any rate, no other battery had a dug-out for a litter of eight pups, with clean straw for their bed, right between two gun-emplacements.

"We found the mother wild out there in the woods," one of the men explained. "She, too, was a victim of war; a refugee from some home destroyed by shell-fire. At first she wouldn't let us approach her, and we tossed her pieces of meat from a safe distance. I think those pups will bring us luck. We'll take them along to the Rhine. Some mascots, eh?"

On our way back to the general's headquarters we must have passed other batteries hidden from sight only a stone's throw away; and yet in an illustrated paper recently I saw a drawing of some guns emplaced on the crest of a bare hill, naked to all the batteries of the enemy but engaged in destroying all the enemy's batteries, according to the account. Eleven months of war have not shaken conventional ideas about gunnery; which is one reason for writing this chapter.

Also, on our way back we learned the object of the German fire in answer to our bombardment of the redoubt and the wireless station. They had shelled a cross-roads and a certain village again. As we passed through the village we noticed a new hole in the church tower and three holes in the churchyard, which had scattered clods of earth about the pavement. A shopkeeper across the street was engaged in repairing a window-frame that had been broken by a shell-fragment.

There is no flustering the French population. That

very day I heard of an old peasant, who asked a British soldier if he could not get permission for the old man to wear some kind of an armband which both sides would respect, so that he could cut his field of wheat between the trenches. Why not? Wasn't it his wheat? Didn't he need the crop?

The Germans fire into villages and towns; for the women and children there are the women and children of the enemy. But those in the German lines belong to the ally of England. Besides, they are women and children. So British gunners avoid the towns — which is, in one sense, a professional handicap.

# XIX

## ARCHIBALD THE ARCHER

The anti-aeroplane gun — Tricks of the trade — The vagabond of the army lines — Before the days of Archibald — Pie for the Taube —"Swaggerest" of the gun tribe — Sport of war — Puffs in the blue — Difficulty of accuracy —"Sending the prying aerial eye home" — The business of planes.

THERE is another kind of gun, vagrant and free lance, which deserves a chapter by itself. It has the same bark as the eighteen-pounder field piece; the flight of the shell makes the same kind of sound. But its scream, instead of passing in a long parabola toward the German lines, goes up in the heavens toward something as large as your hand against the light blue of the summer sky — a German aeroplane.

At a height of seven or eight thousand feet the target seems almost stationary, when really it is going somewhere between fifty and ninety miles an hour. It has all the heavens to itself, and to the British it is a sinister, prying eye that wants to see if we are building any new trenches, if we are moving bodies of troops or of transport in some new direction, and where our batteries are in hiding. That aviator three miles above the earth has many waiting guns at his command. A few signals from his wireless and they would let loose on the target he indicated.

If the planes might fly as low as they pleased, they would know all that was going on in an enemy's lines. They must keep up so high that through the aviator's

glasses a man on the road is the size of a pin-head. To descend low is as certain death as to put your head over the parapet of a trench when the enemy's trench is only a hundred yards away. There are dead lines in the air, no less than on the earth.

Archibald, the anti-aircraft gun, sets the dead line. He watches over it as a cat watches a mouse. The trick of sneaking up under cover of a noon-day cloud and all the other man-bird tricks he knows. A couple of seconds after that crack a tiny puff of smoke breaks about a hundred yards behind the Taube. A soft thistleblow against the blue it seems at that altitude; but it wouldn't if it were about your ears. Then it would sound like a bit of dynamite on an anvil struck by a hammer and you would hear the whiz of scores of bullets and fragments.

The smoking brass shell-case is out of Archibald's steel throat and another shell-case with its charge slipped into place and started on its way before the first puff breaks. The aviator knows what is coming. He knows that one means many, once he is in range.

Archibald rushes the fighting; it is the business of the Taube to sidestep. The aviator cannot hit back except through his allies, the German batteries, on the earth. They would take care of Archibald if they knew where he was. But all that the aviator can see is mottled landscape. From his side Archibald flies no goal flags. He is one of ten thousand tiny objects under the aviator's eye.

Archibald's propensities are entirely peripatetic. He is the vagabond of the army lines. Locate him and he is gone. His home is where night finds him and the day's duties take him. He is the only gun that keeps regular hours like a Christian gentleman.

All the others, great and small, raucous-voiced and shrill-voiced, fire at any hour, night or day. Aeroplanes rarely go up at night; and when no aeroplanes are up, Archibald has no interest in the war. But he is alert at the first flush of dawn, on the lookout for game with the avidity of a pointer dog; for aviators are also up early.

Why he was named Archibald nobody knows. As his full name is Archibald the Archer, possibly it comes from some association with the idea of archery, If there were ten thousand anti-aircraft guns in the British army, every one would be known as Archibald. When the British Expeditionary Force went to France it had none. All the British could do was to bang away at Taubes with thousands of rounds of rifle-bullets, which might fall in their own lines, and with the field guns.

It was pie in those days for the Taubes! Easy to keep out of the range of both rifles and guns and observe well! If the Germans did not know the progress of the British retreat from on high it was their own fault. Now, the business of firing at Taubes is left entirely to Archibald. When you see how hard it is for Archibald, after all his practice, to get a Taube, you understand how foolish it was for the field guns to try to get one.

Archibald, who is quite the "swaggerest" of the gun tribe, has his own private car built especially for him. Such of the cavalry's former part as the planes do not play he plays. He keeps off the enemy's scouts. Do you seek team-work, spirit of corps, and smartness in this theatre of France, where all the old glamour of war is supposed to be lacking? You will find it in the attendants of Archibald. They have

pride, *élan,* alertness, pepper, and all the other appetisers and condiments. They are as neat as a private yacht's crew and as lively as an infield of a major league team. The Archibaldians are naturally bound to think rather well of themselves.

Watch them there, every man knowing his part, as they send their shells after the Taube! There is not enough waste motion among the lot to tip over the range-finder, or the telescopes, or the score board, or any of the other paraphernalia assisting the man who is looking through the sight in knowing where to aim next, as a screw answers softly to his touch.

Is the sport of war dead? Not for Archibald! Here you see your target — which is so rare these days when British infantrymen have stormed and taken trenches without ever seeing a German — and the target is a bird, a man-bird. Puffs of smoke with bursting hearts of death are clustered around the Taube. One follows another in quick succession, for more than one Archibald is firing, before your entranced eyes.

You are staring like the crowd of a county fair at a parachute act. For the next puff may get him. Who knows this better than the aviator? He is, likely, an old hand at the game; or, if he is not, he has all the experience of other veterans to go by. His ruse is the same as that of the escaped prisoner, who runs from the fire of a guard in a zigzag course, and more than that. If a puff comes near on the right, he turns to the left; if one comes near on the left, he turns to the right; if one comes under, he rises; over, he dips. This means that the next shell fired at the same point will be wide of the target.

Looking through the sight, it seems easy to hit a

plane. But here is the difficulty. It takes two seconds, say, for the shell to travel to the range of the plane. The gunner must wait for its burst before he can spot his shot. Ninety miles an hour is a mile and a half a minute. Divide that by thirty and you have about a hundred yards which the plane has travelled from the time the shell left the gun-muzzle till it burst. It becomes a matter of discounting the aviator's speed and guessing from experience which way he will turn next.

That ought to have got him — the burst was right under. No! He rises. Surely that one got him! The puff is right in front, partly hiding the Taube from view. You see the plane tremble as if struck by a violent gust of wind. Close! Within thirty or forty yards, the telescope says. But at that range the naked eye is easily deceived about distance. Probably some of the bullets have cut his plane.

But you must hit the man or the machine in a vital spot in order to bring down your bird. The explosions must be very close to count. It is amazing how much shell-fire an aeroplane can stand. Aviators are accustomed to the whiz of shell-fragments and bullets and to have their planes punctured and ripped. Though their engines are put out of commission, and frequently though the men be wounded, they are able to volplane back to the cover of their own lines.

To make a proper story we ought to have brought down this particular bird. But it had the luck, which most planes, British or German, have, to escape anti-aircraft gun-fire. It had begun edging away after the first shot and soon was out of range. Archibald had served the purpose of his existence. He had sent the prying aerial eye home.

A fight between planes in the air very rarely happens, except in the imagination. Planes do not go up to fight other planes, but for observation. Their business is to see and learn and bring home their news.

# XX

## TRENCHES IN SUMMER

General Mud "down and out"—"What hopes!"—Heroes in khaki —"Tickets to England"—Coddling at home—Comradeship among the men—The uses of barbed wire—"Your hat, sir!"—Sniping—Sentimental Mr. Atkins—Exchange of pleasantries—A "Boche" joke—A mine explodes—Wasting the Kaiser's powder—A maze of trench "streets"—A soldier cook—And cook stoves—Officers' mess—Fresh from Sandhurst—"When do you think the war will be over?"—*Strafing* the chicken—From favourite actors to military methods—A night crawl between trenches—An alarm—In the midst of barbed-wire—Crawling patrols in the wheat field—A narrow escape—A trench cot—The "morning hate"—A memory of cheerful hospitality.

It was the same trench in June, still a relatively "quiet corner," which I had seen in March; but I would never have known it if its location had not been the same on the map. One was puzzled how a place that had been so wet could become so dry.

This time the approach was made in daylight through a long communication ditch, which brought us to a shell-wrecked farmhouse. We passed through this and stepped down at the back door into deep traverses cut among the roots of an orchard; then behind walls of earth high above our heads to battalion headquarters in a neat little shanty, where I deposited the first of the cakes I had brought, on the table beside some battalion reports. A cake is the right gift for the trenches, though less so in summer than in winter when appetites are less keen. The adjutant tried a

slice while the colonel conferred with the general, who had accompanied me this far; and he glanced up at a sheet of writing with a line opposite hours of the day, pinned to a post of his dugout.

"I wanted to see if it were time to make another report," he said. "We are always making reports. Everybody is, so that whoever is superior to some one else knows what is happening in his subordinate's department."

Then in and out in a maze, between walls with straight faces on the hard, dry earth, testifying to the beneficence of summer weather in constructing fastnesses from artillery fire, until we were in the firing-trench, where I was at home among the officers and men of a company. General Mud was "down and out." He waited on the winter rains to take command again. But winter would find an army prepared against his kind of campaign. Life in the trenches in summer was not so unpleasant but that some preferred it, with the excitement of sniping, to the boredom of billets.

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"What hopes!" was the current phrase I heard among the men in these trenches. It shared honours with *strafe*. You have only one life to live and you may lose that any second — what hopes! Dig, dig, dig, and set off a mine that sends Germans skyward in a cloud of dust — what hopes! Bully beef from Chicago and Argentina is no food for babes, but better than "K.K." bread — what hopes! Mr. Thomas Atkins, British regular, takes things as they come — and a lot of them come — shells, bullets, asphyxiating gas, grenades, and bombs.

There is much to be thankful for. The King's Own Particular Fusiliers, as we shall call this regiment, had only three men hit yesterday. On every man's cap is a metal badge crowded with battle honours, from the storming of Quebec to the relief of Ladysmith. Heroic its history; but no battle honours equal that of the regiment's part in the second battle of Ypres; and no heroes of the regiment's story, whom you picture in imagination with halos of glory in the wish that you might have met them in the flesh in their scarlet coats, are the equal of these survivors in plain khaki manning a ditch in A. D. 1915, whom any one may meet.

But do not tell them that they are heroes. They will deny it on the evidence of themselves as eyewitnesses of the action. To remark that the K. O. P. F. are brave is like remarking that water flows down hill. It is the business of the K. O. P. F. to be brave. Why talk about it?

One of the three men hit was killed. Well, everybody in the war rather expects to be killed. The other two "got tickets to England," as they say. My lady will take the convalescents joy riding in her car and afterwards seat them in easy chairs, arranging the cushions with her own hands, and feed them slices of cold chicken in place of bully beef and strawberries and cream in place of ration marmalade. Oh, my! What hopes!

Mr. Atkins does not mind being a hero for the purposes of such treatment. Then, with never a twinkle in his eye, he will tell my lady that he does not want to return to the front; he has had enough of it, he has. My lady's patriotism will be a trifle shocked, as Mr. Atkins knows it will be; and she will wonder

if the "stick it" quality of the British soldier is weakening, as Mr. Atkins knows she will. For he has more kinks in his mental equipment than mere nobility ever guesses and he is having the time of his life in more respects than strawberries and cream. What hopes! Of course, he will return and hold on in the face of all that the Germans can give, without any pretence to bravery.

If one goes as a stranger into the trenches on a sightseeing tour and says, "How are you?" and, "Are you going to Berlin?" and, "Are you comfortable?" etc., Tommy Atkins will say, "Yes, sir," and "Very well, sir," etc., as becomes all polite regular soldier men; and you get to know him about as well as you know the members of a club if you are shown the library and dine at a corner table with a friend.

Spend the night in the trenches and you are taken into the family; into that very human family of soldierdom in a quiet corner; and the old, care-free spirit of war, which some people thought had passed, is found to be no less alive in siege warfare than on a march of regulars on the Indian frontier or in the Philippines. Gaiety and laughter and comradeship and "joshing" are here among men to whom wounds and death are a part of the game. One may challenge high explosives with a smile, no less than ancient round shot. Settle down behind the parapet and the little incongruities of a trench, paltry without the intimacy of men and locality, make for humour no less than in a shop or a factory.

Under the parapet runs the tangle of barbed wire — barbed wire from Switzerland to Belgium — to welcome visitors from that direction, which, to say the

least, would be an impolitic direction of approach for any stranger.

"All sightseers should come into the trenches from the rear," says Mr. Atkins. "Put it down in the guidebooks."

Beyond the barbed wire in the open field the wheat which some farmer sowed before the positions were established in this area is now in head, rippling with the breeze, making a golden sea up to the wall of sandbags which is the enemy's line. It was late June at its loveliest; no signs of war except the sound of our guns some distance away and an occasional sniper's bullet. One cracked past as I was looking through my glasses to see if there were any evidence of life in the German trenches.

"Your hat, sir!"

Another moved a sandbag slightly, but not until after the hat had come down and the head under it most expeditiously. Up to eight hundred yards a bullet cracks; beyond that range it whistles, sighs, even wheezes. An elevation gives snipers, who are always trained shots, an angle of advantage. In winter they had to rely for cover on buildings, which often came tumbling down with them when hit by a shell. The foliage of summer is a boon to their craft.

"Does it look to you like an opening in the branches of that tree — the big one at the right?"

In the mass of leaves a dark spot was visible. It might be natural, or it might be a space cut away for the swing of a rifle barrel. Perhaps sitting up there snugly behind a bullet-proof shield fastened to the limbs was a German sharpshooter, watching for a shot with the patience of a hound for a rabbit to come out of its hole.

"It's about time we gave that tree a spray good for that kind of fungus, from a machine gun!"

A bullet coming from our side swept overhead. One of our own sharpshooters had seen something to shoot at.

"Not giving you much excitement!" said Tommy.

"I suppose I'd get a little if I stood up on the parapet?" I asked.

"You wouldn't get a ticket for England; you'd get a box!"

"There's a cemetery just back of the lines if you'd prefer to stay in France!"

I had passed that cemetery with its fresh wooden crosses on my way to the trench. These tender-hearted soldiers who joked with death had placed flowers on the graves of fallen comrades and bought elaborate French funeral wreaths with their meagre pay — which is another side of Mr. Thomas Atkins. There is sentiment in him. Yes, he's loaded with sentiment, but not for the movies.

"Keep your head down there, Eames!" called a corporal. "I don't want to be taking an inventory of your kit."

Eames did not even realise that his head was above the parapet. The hardest thing to teach a soldier is not to expose himself. Officers keep iterating warnings and then forget to practise what they preach. That morning a soldier had been shot through the heart and arm sideways back of the trench. He had lain down unnoticed for a nap in the sun, it was supposed. When he awoke, presumably he sat up and yawned and Herr Schmidt, from some platform in a tree, had a bloody reward for his patience.

The next morning I saw the British take their re-

venge. Some German who thought that he could not be seen in the mist of dawn was walking along the German parapet. What hopes! Four or five men took careful aim and fired. That dim figure collapsed in a way that was convincing.

As I swept the line of German trenches with the glasses, I saw a wisp of a flag clinging to its pole in the still air far down to the left. Flags are as unusual above trenches as men standing up in full view of the enemy. Then a breeze caught the folds of the flag and I saw that it was the tricolour of France.

"A *Boche* joke!" Tommy explained.

"Probably they are hating the French to-day?"

"No, it's been there for some days. They want us to shoot at the flag of our ally. They'd get a laugh out of that — a regular *Boche* notion of humour."

"If it were a German flag?" I suggested.

"What hopes! We'd make it into a lace curtain!"

Even the guns had ceased firing. The birds in their evensong had all the war to themselves. It was difficult to believe that if you stood on top of the parapet anybody would shoot at you; no, not even if you walked down the road that ran through the wheatfield, everything was so peaceful. One grew sceptical of there being any Germans in the trenches opposite.

"There are three or four sharpshooters and a fat old *Boche* professor in spectacles, who moves a machine gun up and down for a bluff," said a soldier, and another corrected him:

"No, the old professor's the one that walks along at night sending up flares!"

"Munching K.K. bread with his false teeth!"

"And singing the hymn of hate!"

Thus the talk ran on in the quiet of evening, till we heard a concussion and a quarter of a mile away, behind a screen of trees, a pillar of smoke rose to the height of two or three hundred feet.

"A mine!"

"In front of the —th brigade!"

"Ours or the *Boches'?*"

"Ours, from the way the smoke went — our fuse!"

"No, theirs!"

Our colonel telephoned down to know if we knew whose mine it was, which was the question we wanted to ask him. The guns from both sides became busy under the column of smoke. Oh, yes, there were Germans in the trenches which had appeared vacant. Their shots and ours merged in the hissing medley of a tempest.

"Not enough guns — not enough noise for an attack!" said experienced Tommy, who knew what an attack was like.

The commander of the adjoining brigade telephoned to the division commander, who passed the word through to our colonel, who passed it to us, that the mine was German and had burst thirty yards short of the British trench.

"After all that digging, wasting *Boche* powder in that fashion! The Kaiser won't like it!" said Mr. Atkins. "We exploded one under them yesterday and it made them hate so hard they couldn't wait. They've awful tempers, the *Boches!*" And he finished the job on which he was engaged when interrupted, eating a large piece of ration bread surmounted by all the ration jam it would hold; while

one of the company officers reminded me that it was about dinner time.

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"What do you think I am? A blooming traffic policeman?" growled the cook to two soldiers who had found themselves in a blind alley in the maze of streets back of the firing-trench. "My word! Is His Majesty's army becoming illiterate? *Strafe* that sign at the corner! What do you think we put it up for? To show what a beautiful hand we had at printing?"

The sign on a board fastened against the earth wall read, "No thoroughfare!" The soldier cook, with a fork in his hand, his sleeves rolled up, his shirt open at his tanned throat, looked formidable. He was preoccupied; he was at close quarters roasting a chicken over a small stove. Yes, they have cook stoves in the trenches. Why not? The line had been in the same position for six months.

"Little by little we improve our happy home," said the cook.

The latest acquisition was a lace curtain for the officers' mess hall, bought at a store in the nearest town.

When the cook was inside his kitchen there was no room to spill anything on the floor. The kitchen was about three feet square, with boarded walls and roof, which was covered with tar paper and a layer of earth set level with the trench parapet. The chicken roasted and the frying potatoes sizzled as an occasional bullet passed overhead, even as flies buzz about the screen door when Mary is baking biscuits for supper.

The officers' mess hall, next to the kitchen and built in the same fashion, had some boards nailed on posts sunk in the ground for a table, which was proof against tipping when you climbed over it or squeezed around it to your place. The chairs were rifle-ammunition boxes, whose contents had been emptied with individual care, bullet by bullet, at the Germans in the trench on the other side of the wheat-field. Dinner was at nine in the evening, when it was still twilight in the longest day of the year in this region. The hour fits in with trench routine, when night is the time to be on guard and you sleep by day. Breakfast comes at nine in the morning. I was invited to help eat the chicken and to spend the night.

Now, the general commanding the brigade who accompanied me to the trenches had been hit twice. So had the colonel, a man about forty. From forty, ages among the regimental officers dropped into the twenties. Many of the older men who started in the war had been killed, or were back in England wounded, or had been promoted to other commands where their experience was more useful. To youth, life is sweet and danger is life. The oldest of the officers of the proud old K. O. P. F. who gathered for dinner was about twenty-five, though when he assumed an air of authority he seemed about forty. It was not right to ask the youngest his age. Parenthetically, let it be said that he is trying to start a moustache. They had come fresh from Sandhurst to swift tuition in gruelling, incessant warfare.

"Has any one asked him it yet?" one inquired, referring to some question to the guest.

"Not yet? Then all together: When do you think that the war will be over?"

It was the eternal question of the trenches, the army and the world. We had it over with before the soldier cook brought on the roast chicken, which was received with a befitting chorus of approbation:

Who would carve? Who knew how to carve? Modesty passed the honour to its neighbour, till a brave man said:

"I will! I will *strafe* the chicken!"

*Gott strafe England! Strafe* has become a noun, a verb, an adjective, a cussword, and a term of greeting. Soldier asks soldier how he is strafing to-day. When the Germans are not called *Boches* they are called Strafers. "Won't you strafe a little for us?" Tommy sings out to the German trenches when they are close. What hopes!

That gallant youngster of the K. O. P. F. in the midst of bantering advice succeeded in separating the meat from the bones without landing a leg in anybody's lap or a wing in anybody's eye. Timid spectators who had hung back where he had dared might criticise his form, but they could not deny the efficiency of his execution. He was appointed permanent "strafer" of all the fowls that came to table.

Everybody talked and joked about everything, from plays in London to the Germans. There were arguments about favourite actors and military methods. The sense of danger was as absent as if we had been dining in a summer garden. It was the parents and relatives in pleasant English homes in fear of a dread telegram who were worrying, not the sons and brothers in danger. Isn't it better that way? Would not the parents prefer it that way? Wasn't it the way of the ancestors in the scarlet coats and the Merrie England of their day? With the elasticity of youth my

hosts adapted themselves to circumstances. In their light-heartedness they made war seem a keen sport. They lived war for all it was worth. If it gets on their nerves their efficiency is spoiled. There is no room for a jumpy, excitable man in the trenches. Youth's resources defy monotony and death at the same time.

An expedition had been planned for that night. A patrol the previous night had brought in word that the Germans had been sneaking up and piling sandbags in the wheat-field. The plan was to slip out as soon as it was really dark with a machine gun and a dozen men, get behind the Germans' own sandbags, and give them a perfectly informal reception when they returned to go on with their work.

Before dinner, however, J——, who was to be the general of the expedition, and his subordinates made a reconnaissance. Two or more officers or men always go out together on any trip of this kind in that ticklish space between the trenches, where it is almost certain death to be seen by the enemy. If one is hit the other can help him back. If one survives he will bring back the result of his investigations.

J—— had his own ideas about comfort in trousers in the trench in summer. He wore trunks with his knees bare. When he had to do a "crawl" he unwound his puttee leggings and wound them over his knees. He and the others slipped over the parapet without attracting the attention of the enemy's sharpshooters. On hands and knees, like boy scouts playing Indian, they passed through a narrow avenue in the ugly barbed wire, and still not a shot at them. A matter of the commonplace to the men in the trench held the spectator in suspense. There was a fasci-

nation about the thing, too; that of the sporting chance, without a full realisation that failure in this hide-and-seek game might mean a spray of bullets and death for these young men.

They entered the wheat, moving slowly like two land turtles. The grain parted in swaths over them. Surely the Germans might see the turtles' heads as they were raised to look around. No officer can be too young and supple for this kind of work. Here the company officer just out of school is in his element, with an advantage over older officers. That pair were used to crawling. They did not keep their heads up long. They knew just how far they might expose themselves. They passed out of sight, and reappeared and slipped back over the parapet again without the Germans being any the wiser.

Hard luck! It is an unaccommodating world! They found that the patrol which had examined the bags at night had failed to discern that they were old and must have been there for some time.

"I'll take the machine gun out, anyhow, if the colonel will permit it," said J——.

For the colonel puts on the brakes. Otherwise, there is no telling what risks youth might take with machine guns.

We were half through dinner when a corporal came to report that a soldier on watch thought that he had seen some Germans moving in the wheat very near our barbed wire. Probably a false alarm; but no one in a trench ever acts on the theory that any alarm is false. Eternal vigilance is the price of holding a trench. Either side is cudgelling its brains day and night to spring some new trick on the other. If one side succeeds with a trick, the other immediately

adopts it. No international copyright on strategy is recognised. We rushed out of the mess hall into the firing-trench, where we found the men on the alert, their rifles laid on the spot where the Germans were supposed to have been seen.

"Who are you? Answer, or we fire!" called the ranking young lieutenant.

If any persons present out at front in face of thirty rifles knew the English language and had not lost the instinct of self-preservation, they would certainly have become articulate in response to such an unveiled hint. Not a sound came. Probably a rabbit running through the wheat had been the cause of the alarm. But you take no risks. The order was given, and the men combed the wheat with a fusillade.

"Enough! Cease fire!" said the officer. "Nobody there. If there had been we should have heard the groan of a wounded man or seen the wheat stir as the Germans hugged closer to the earth for cover."

This he knew by experience. It was not the first time he had used a fusillade in this kind of a test.

After dinner J—— rolled his puttees up around his bare knees again, for the colonel had not withdrawn permission for the machine gun expedition. J——'s knees were black and blue in spots; they were also — well, there is not much water for washing purposes in the trenches. Great sport that, crawling through the dew-moist wheat in the faint moonlight, looking for a bunch of Germans in the hope of turning a machine gun on them before they turn one on you.

"One man hit by a stray bullet," said J——, on his return.

"I heard the bullet go th-ip into the earth after it went through his leg," said the other officer.

"Blythe was a recruit and he had asked me to take him out the first time there was anything doing. I promised that I would, and he got about the only shot fired at us."

"Need a stretcher?"

"No."

Blythe came hobbling through the traverse to the communication trench, seeming well pleased with himself. The soft part of the leg is not a bad place to receive a bullet if one is due to hit you.

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Night is always the time in the trenches when life grows more interesting and death more likely.

"It's dark enough, now," said one of the youngsters who was out on another scout. "We'll go out with the patrol."

By day, the slightest movement of the enemy is easily and instantly detected. The light keeps the combatants to the warrens which protect them from shell and bullet-fire. At night there is no telling what mischief the enemy may be up to; you must depend upon the ear rather than the eye for watching. Then the human soldier-fox comes out of his burrow and sneaks forth on the lookout for prey; both sides are on the prowl.

"Trained owls would be the most valuable scouts we could have," said the young officer. "They would be more useful than aeroplanes in locating the enemy's gun positions. A properly reliable owl would come back and say that a German patrol was out in the wheat-field at such a point and a machine gun would wipe out the German patrol."

We turned into a side trench, an alley off the main street, leading out of the front trench toward the Germans.

"Anybody out?" he asked a soldier, who was on guard at the end of it.

"Yes, two."

Climbing out of the ditch, we were in the midst of a tangle of barbed wire protecting the trench front, which was faintly visible in the starlight. There was a break in the tangle, a narrow cut in the hedge, as it were, kept open for just such purposes as this. When the patrol returned it closed the gate again.

"Look out for that wire — just there! Do you see it? We've everything to keep the *Boches* off our front lawn except 'keep off the grass!' signs."

It was perfectly still, a warm summer night without a cat's-paw of breeze. Through the dark curtain of the sky in a parabola rising from the German trenches swept a brilliant sputter of red light of a German flare. It was coming as straight toward us as if it had been aimed at us. It cast a searching, uncanny glare over the tall wheat in head between the trenches.

"Down flat!" whispered the officer.

It seemed foolish to grovel before a piece of fireworks. There was no firing in our neighbourhood; nothing to indicate a state of war between the British Empire and Germany; no visual evidence of any German army anywhere in France except that flare. However, if a guide, who knows as much about war as this one, says to prostrate yourself when you are out between two lines of machine guns and rifles — between the fighting powers of Britain and Germany

— you take the hint. The flare sank into the earth a few yards away, after a last insulting, ugly fling of sparks in our faces.

"What if we had been seen?"

"They'd have combed the wheat in this neighbourhood thoroughly, and they might have got us."

"It's hard to believe," I said.

So it was, he agreed. That was the exasperating thing about it. Always hard to believe, perhaps, until after all the cries of wolf the wolf came; until after nineteen harmless flares the twentieth revealed to the watching enemy the figure of a man above the wheat, when a crackling chorus of bullets would suddenly break the silence of night by concentrating on a target. Keeping cover from German flares is a part of the minute, painstaking economy of war.

We crawled on slowly, taking care to make no noise, till we brought up behind two soldiers hugging the earth, rifles in hand ready to fire instantly. It was their business not only to see the enemy first, but to shoot first, and to capture or kill any German patrol. The officer spoke to them and they answered. It was unnecessary for them to say that they had seen nothing. If they had we should have known it. He was out there less to scout himself than to make sure that they were on the job; that they knew how to watch. The visit was part of his routine. We did not even whisper. Preferably, all whispering would be done by any German patrol out to have a look at our barbed wire and overheard by us.

Silence and the starlight and the damp wheat; but, yes, there was war. You heard gun-fire half a mile, perhaps a mile, away; and raising your head you saw auroras from bursting shells. We heard at our backs

faintly snatches of talk from our trenches and faintly in front the talk from theirs. It sounded rather inviting and friendly from both sides, like that around some campfire on the plains.

It seemed quite within the bounds of probability that you might have crawled on up to the Germans and said, "Howdy!" But by the time you reached the edge of their barbed wire and before you could present your visiting-card, if not sooner, you would have been full of holes. That was just the kind of diversion from trench monotony for which the Germans were looking.

"Well, shall we go back?" asked the officer.

There seemed no particular purpose in spending the night prone in the wheat with your ears cocked like a pointer dog's. Besides, he had other duties, exacting duties laid down by the colonel as the result of trench experience in his responsibility for the command of a company of men.

It happened, as we crawled back into the trench, that a fury of shots broke out from a point along the line two or three hundred yards away; sharp, vicious shots on the still night air, stabbing, merciless death in their sound. Oh, yes, there was war in France; unrelenting, shrewd, tireless war. A touch of suspicion anywhere and the hornets swarmed.

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It was two A. M. From the dugouts came unmistakable sounds of slumber. Men off duty were not kept awake by cold and moisture in summer. They had fashioned for themselves comfortable dormitories in the hard earth walls. A cot in an officer's bed chamber was indicated as mine. The walls

had been hung with cuts from illustrated papers and bagging spread on the floor to make it "home-like." He lay down on the floor because he was nearer the door in case he had to respond to an alarm; besides, he said I would soon appreciate that I was not the object of any favouritism. So I did. It was a trench-made cot, fashioned by some private of engineers, I fancy, who had Germans rather than the American cousin in mind.

"The wall side of the rib that runs down the middle is the comfortable side, I have found," said my host. "It may not appear so at first, but you will find that it works out that way."

Nevertheless, one slept, his last recollection that of sniping shots, to be awakened with the first streaks of day by the sound of a fusillade — the "morning hate" or the "morning strafe," as it was called. After the vigil of darkness it breaks the monotony to salute the dawn with a burst of rifle-shots. Eyes strained through the mist over the wheat-field watching for some one of the enemy who may be exposing himself, unconscious that it is light enough for him to be visible. Objects which are not men but look as if they might be in the hazy distance, called for attention on the chance. For ten minutes, perhaps, the serenade lasted, and then things settled down to the normal. The men were yawning and stirring from their dugouts. After the muster they would take the places of those who had been "on the bridge" through the night.

"It's a case of how little water you can wash with, isn't it?" I said to the cook, who appreciated my thoughtfulness when I made shift with a dipperful, as I had done on desert journeys. We were in a trench

that was inundated with water in winter, and not more than two miles from a town which had a water system. But bringing a water supply in pails along narrow trenches is a poor pastime, though better than bringing it up under the rifle-sights of snipers across the fields back of the trenches.

" Don't expect much for breakfast," said the *strafer* of the chicken. But it was eggs and bacon, the British stand-by in all weathers, at home and abroad.

J—— was going to turn in and sleep. These youngsters could sleep at any time; for one hour, or two hours, or five, or ten, if they had a chance. A sudden burst of rifle-fire was the alarm clock which always promptly awakened them. The recollection of cheery hospitality and their fine, buoyant spirit is even clearer now than when I left the trench.

# XXI

## A SCHOOL IN BOMBING

War specialism — A school on a French farm — A lesson — "Bombing them out" — Fighting in zigzag traverses — Cold steel — The bomb storehouse — All shapes and sizes — Revivals of Roman legionary days — A home-made product — A fool-proof, up to the minute and popular (except with the "Boches") variety.

It was at a bombing school on a French farm, where chosen soldiers brought back from the trenches were being trained in the use of the anarchists' weapon, which has now become as respectable as the rifle. The war has steadily developed specialism. M.B. degrees for Master Bombers are not beyond the range of possibilities.

Present was the chief instructor, a young Scotch subaltern with blue eyes, a pleasant smile, and a Cock o' the North spirit. He might have been twenty years old, though he did not look it. On his breast was the purple and white ribbon of the new order of the Military Cross, which you get for doing something in this war which would have won you a Victoria Cross in one of the other wars.

Also present was the assistant instructor, a sergeant of regulars — and very much of a regular — who had three ribbons which he had won in previous campaigns. He, too, had blue eyes, bland blue eyes. These two understood each other.

"If you don't drop it, why, it's all right!" said the sergeant. "Of course, if you do —"

I did not drop it.

"And when you throw it, sir, you must look out and

not hit the man behind and knock the bomb out of your hand. That has happened before to an absent-minded fellow who was about to toss one at the *Boches,* and it doesn't do to be absent-minded when you throw bombs."

"They say that you sometimes pick up the German bombs and chuck them back before they explode," it was suggested.

"Yes, sir, I've read things like that in some of the accounts of the reporters who write from Somewhere in France. You don't happen to know where that is, sir? All I can say is that if you are going to do it you must be quick about it. I shouldn't advise delaying your decision, sir, or perhaps when you reached down to pick it up, neither your hand nor the bomb would be there. They'd have gone off together, sir."

"Have you ever been hurt in your handling of bombs?" I asked.

Surprise in the bland blue eyes.

"Oh, no, sir! Bombs are well behaved if you treat them right. It's all in being thoughtful and considerate of them!" Meanwhile, he was jerking at some kind of a patent fuse set in a shell of high explosive. "This is a poor kind, sir. It's been discarded, but I thought that you might like to see it. Never did like it. Always making trouble!"

More distance between the audience and the performer.

"Now I've got it, sir — get down, sir!"

The audience carried out instructions to the letter, as army regulations require. It got behind the protection of one of the practice-trench traverses. He threw the discard beyond another wall of earth.

There was a sharp report, a burst of smoke, and some fragments of earth were tossed into the air.

In a small affair of two hundred yards of trench a week before, it was estimated that the British and the Germans together threw about five thousand bombs in this fashion. It was enough to sadden any Minister of Munitions. However, the British kept the trench.

"Do the men like to become bombers?" I asked the subaltern.

"I should say so! It puts them up in front. It gives them a chance to throw something, and they don't get much cricket in France, you see. We had a pupil here last week, who broke the throwing record for distance. He was as pleased as Punch with himself. A first-class bombing detachment has a lot of pride of corps."

To bomb soon became as common a verb with the army as to bayonet. "We bombed them out" meant a section of trench taken. As you know, a trench is dug and built with sandbags in zigzag traverses. In following the course of a trench it is as if you followed the sides of the squares of a checkerboard up and down and across on the same tier of squares. The square itself is a bank of earth, with the cut on either side and in front of it. When a bombing party bombs their way into possession of a section of German trench, there are Germans under cover of the traverses on either side. They are waiting around the corner to shoot the first British head that shows itself.

"It is important that you and not the *Boches* chuck the bombs over first," explained the subaltern. "Also, that you get them into the right traverse, or

they may be as troublesome to you as to the enemy."

With bombs bursting in their faces, the Germans who are not put out of action are blinded and stunned. In the moment when they are thus off guard, the aggressors leap around the corner.

"And then?"

"Stick 'em, sir!" said the matter-of-fact sergeant. "Yes, the cold steel is best. And do it first! As Mr. MacPherson said, it's very important to do it first."

It has been found that something short is handy for this kind of work. In such cramped quarters — a ditch six feet deep and from two to three feet broad — the rifle is an awkward length to permit of prompt and skilful use of the bayonet.

"Yes, sir, you can mix it up better with something handy — to think that British soldiers would come to fighting like assassins!" said the sergeant. "You must be spry on such occasions. It's no time for wool-gathering."

Not a smile from him or the subaltern all the time. They were the kind you would like to have along in a tight corner, whether you had to fight with knives, fists, or seventeen-inch howitzers.

The sergeant took us into the storehouse where he kept his supply of bombs.

"What if a German shell should strike your storehouse?" I asked.

"Then, sir, I expect that most of the bombs would be exploded. Bombs are very peculiar in their habits. What do you think, sir?"

It was no trouble to show stock, as clerks at the stores say. He brought forth all the different kinds of bombs that British ingenuity has invented — but no,

not all invented. These would mount into the thousands. Every British inventor who knows anything about explosives has tried his hand at a new kind of bomb. One means all the kinds which the British War Office has considered worth a practice test. The spectator was allowed to handle each one as much as he pleased. There had been occasions, that boyish Scotch subaltern told me, when the men who were examining the products of British ingenuity — well, the subaltern had sandy hair, too, which heightened the effect of his blue eye.

There were yellow and green and blue and black and striped bombs; egg-shaped, barrel-shaped, conical, and concave bombs; bombs that were exploded by pulling a string and by pressing a button — all these to be thrown by hand, without mentioning grenades and other larger varieties to be thrown by mechanical means, which would have made a Chinese warrior of Confucius' time or a Roman legionary feel at home.

"This was the first-born," the subaltern explained, "the first thing we could lay our hands on when the close quarters' trench warfare began."

It was as out of date as grandfather's smooth-bore, the tin-pot bomb that both sides used early in the winter. A wick was attached to the high explosive, wrapped in cloth and stuck in an ordinary army jam can.

"Quite home-made, as you see, sir," remarked the sergeant. "Used to fix them up ourselves in the trenches in odd hours — saved burying the refuse jam tins according to medical corps directions — and you threw them at the *Boches*. Had to use a match to light it. Very old-fashioned, sir. I wonder if that old fuse has got damp. No, it's going all right"—

and he threw the jam pot, which made a good explosion. Later, when he began hammering the end of another, he looked up in mild surprise at the dignified back-stepping of the spectators.

"Is that fuse out?" some one asked.

"Yes, sir. Of course, sir," he replied. "It's safer. But here is the best; we're discarding the others," he went on, as he picked up a bomb.

It was a pleasure to throw this crowning achievement of experiments. It fitted your hand nicely; it threw easily; it did the business; it was fool-proof against a man in love or a war-poet.

"We saw as soon as this style came out," said the sergeant, "that it was bound to be popular. Everybody asks for it — except the *Boches,* sir."

# XXII

## MY BEST DAY AT THE FRONT

Planning at headquarters — Trench maps — A "hot corner" north of Ypres — The English in possession — Preparation for a gas attack — Farming behind the lines — Reaching the tornado belt —"Policing the district"— Man the most precious machine — A general's dugout headquarters — First aid to the wounded — Cave men at home — The scream of a great shell — A close call — Galleries to the front — The philosophy of shell-fire — The flitting planes — An arc of shell fire — Lace work of puffs from shrapnel bursts —"Artillery preparation for an infantry attack" — Under a tornado of steel hail.

It was the best day because one ran the gamut of the mechanics and emotions of modern war within a single experience — and oh, the twinkle in that staff officer's eye!

It was on a Monday that I first met him in the ballroom of a large château. Here another officer was talking over a telephone in an explicit, businesslike fashion about "sending up more bombs," while we looked at maps spread out on narrow, improvised tables, such as are used for a buffet at a reception. Those maps showed all the British trenches and all the German trenches — spider-web like lines that cunning human spiders had spun with spades — in that region; and where our batteries were and where some of the German batteries were, if our aeroplane observations were correct.

To the layman they were simply blue prints, such as he sees in the office of an engineer or an architect, or elaborate printed maps with many blue and red pen-

cillings. To the general in command they were alive with rifle-power and gun-power and other powers mysterious to us; the sword with which he thrust and feinted and guarded in the ceaseless fencing of trench warfare, while higher authorities than he kept their secrets as he kept his and bided their day.

That morning one of the battalions which had its pencilled place on the map had taken a section of trench from the Germans about the length of two city blocks. It got into the official bulletins of both sides several times, this two hundred yards at Pilken in the everlastingly "hot corner" north of Ypres. So it was of some importance, though not on account of its length.

To take two hundred yards of trench because it is two hundred yards of trench is not good war, tacticians agree. Good war is to have millions of shells and vast reserves ready and to go in over a broad area and keep on going night and day, with a Niagara of artillery, as fresh battalions are fed into the conflict.

But the Germans had command of some rising ground in front of the British line at this point. They could fire down into our trench and crosswise of it. It was as if we were in the alley and they were in a first-floor window. This meant many casualties. It was man-economy and fire-economy to take that two hundred yards. A section of trench may always be taken if worth while. Reduce it to dust with shells and then dash into the breach and drive the enemy back from zigzag traverse to traverse with bombs. But such a small action requires as careful planning as a big operation of other days. We had taken the two hundred yards. The thing was to hold them. That is always the difficulty; for the enemy will concentrate his guns

to give you the same dose that you gave him. In an hour after they were in, the British soldiers, who knew exactly what they had to do and how to do it after months of experience, had turned the wreck of the German trenches into a British trench which faced toward Berlin, rather than Calais.

In their official bulletin the Germans said that they had recovered the trench. They did recover part of it for a few hours. It was then that the commander on the German side must have sent in his report to catch the late evening editions. Commanders do not like to confess the loss of trenches. It is the sort of thing that makes Headquarters ask: "What is the matter with you over there, anyway?" There was a time when the German bulletins about the Western front seemed rather truthful; but of late they have been getting into bad habits.

The British general knew what was coming; he knew that he would start the German hornets out of their nest when he took the trench; he knew, too, that he could rely upon his men to hold till they were told to retire or there were none left to retire. The British are a home-loving people, who do not like to be changing their habitations. In succeeding days the question up and down the lines was, "Have we still got that trench?" Only two hundred yards of ditch on the continent of Europe! But was it still ours? Had the Germans succeeded in "strafing" us out of it yet? They had shelled all the trenches in the region of the lost trench and had made three determined and unsuccessful counter-attacks when, on the fifth day, we returned to the château to ask if it were practicable to visit the new trench.

"At your own risk!" said the staff officer. If we preferred we could sit on the veranda where there were easy chairs, on a pleasant summer day. Very peaceful the sweep of the well-kept grounds and the shade of the stately trees of that sequestered world of landscape. Who was at war? Why was any one at war? Two staff automobiles awaiting orders on the drive and a dust-laden despatch rider with messages, who went past toward the rear of the house, were the only visual evidence of war.

The staff officer served the three of us with helmets for protection in case we got into a gas attack. He said that we might enter our front trenches at a certain point and then work our way as near the new part as we could; division headquarters, four or five miles distant, would show us the way. It was then that the twinkle in the staff officer's eye as it looked straight into yours became manifest. You can never tell, I have learned, just what a twinkle in a British staff officer's eye may portend. These fellows who are promoted up from the trenches to join the "brain-trust" in the château, know a great deal more about what is going on than you can learn by standing in the road far from the front and listening to the sound of the guns. We encountered a twinkle in another eye at division headquarters, which may have been telephoned ahead along with the instructions, "At their own risk."

There are British staff officers who would not mind pulling a correspondent's leg on a summer day; though, perhaps, it was really the Germans who pulled ours, in this instance. Somebody did remark at some headquarters, I recall, that, "You never know!" which

shows that staff officers do not know everything. The Germans possess half the knowledge — and they are at great pains not to part with their half.

We proceeded in our car along country roads, quiet, normal country roads, off the main highway. It has been written again and again, and it cannot be written too many times, that life is going on as usual in the rear of the army. Nothing could be more wonderful and yet nothing more natural. All the men of fighting age were absent. White-capped grandmothers, too old to join the rest of the family in the fields, sat in doorways sewing. Everybody was at work and the crops were growing. One never tires of remarking the fact. It brings you back from the destructive orgy of war to the simple, constructive things of life. An industrious people go on cultivating the land and the land keeps on producing. It is pleasant to think that the crops of Northern France were good in 1915. That is cheering news from home for the soldiers of France at the front.

At an indicated point we left the car to go forward on foot, and the chauffeur was told to wait for us at another point. If the car went any farther it might draw shell-fire. Army authorities know how far they may take cars with reasonable safety as well as a pilot knows the rocks and shoals at a harbour entrance.

There was an end of white-capped grandmothers in doorways; an end of people working in the fields. Rents in the roofless walls of unoccupied houses stared at the passerby. We were in a dead land. One of two soldiers whom we met coming from the opposite direction pointed at what looked like a small miner's cabin half covered with earth, screened by a

tree, as the next headquarters which we were seeking in our progress.

It was not for sightseers to take the time of the general, who received us at the door of his dugout. The German guns had concentrated on a section of his trenches in a way that indicated that another attack was coming. One company already had suffered heavy losses. It was an hour of responsibility for the general, isolated in the midst of silent fields and houses, waiting for news from a region hidden from his view by trees and hedges in that flat country. He might not move from headquarters, for then he would be out of communication with his command. His men were being pounded by shells and the inexorable law of organisation kept him at the rear. Up in the trench he might have been one helpless human being in a havoc of shells which had cut the wires. His place was where he could be in touch with his subordinates and his superiors.

True, we wanted to go to the trench that the Germans had lost and his section was the short cut. Modesty was not the only reason for not taking it. As we started along a road parallel to the front, the head of a soldier popped out of the earth and told us that orders were to walk in the ditch. One judged that he was less concerned with our fate than with the likelihood of our drawing fire, which he and the others in a concealed trench would suffer after we had passed on.

There were three of us, two correspondents, L—— and myself, and R——, an officer, which is quite enough for an expedition of this kind. Now we were finding our own way, with the help of the large scale army map which had every house, every farm, and

every group of trees marked. The farms had been given such names as Joffre, Kitchener, French, Botha, and others which the Germans would not like. One cut across fields with the same confidence that, following a diagram of city streets in a guidebook, he turns to the left for the public library and to the right for the museum.

Our own guns were speaking here and there from their hiding-places; and overhead an occasional German shrapnel burst. This seemed a waste of the Kaiser's munitions, as there was no one in sight. Yet there was purpose in the desultory scattering of bullets from on high. They were policing the district; they were warning the hated British in reserve not to play cricket in those fields or march along those deserted roads.

The more bother in taking cover that the Germans can make the British, the better they like it; and the British return the compliment in kind. Everything that harasses your enemy is counted to the good. If every shell fired had killed a man in this war, there would be no soldiers left to fight on either side; yet never have shells been so important in war before. They can reach the burrowing human beings in shelters which are bullet-proof; they are the omnipresent threat of death. The firing of shells from batteries securely hidden and emplaced represents no cost of life to your side, only cost of material; which ridicules the foolish conclusion that machinery and not men count. It is because man is still the most precious machine — a machine that money cannot reproduce — that gun machinery is so much in favour, and every commander wants to use shells as freely as you use city water when you don't pay for it by metre.

Now another headquarters and another general, also isolated in a dugout, holding the reins of his wires over a section of line adjoining that of the one we had just left. Before we proceeded we must look over his shelter from shell-storms. The only time that these British generals become boastful is over their dugouts. They take all the pride in them of the man who has bought a plot of land and built himself a home; and like him, they keep on making improvements and calling attention to them.

I must say that this was one of the best shelters I have seen anywhere in the tornado belt; and whatever I am not, I am certainly an expert in dugouts. Of course, this general, too, said, "At your own risk!" He was good enough to send a young officer with us up to the trenches; then we should not make any mistakes about direction if we wanted to reach the neighbourhood of the two hundred yards which we had taken from the Germans. When we thanked him and said "Good-bye!" he remarked:

"We never say good-bye up here. It does not sound pleasant. Make it *au revoir.*" And he, too, had a twinkle in his eye.

By this time one leg ought to have been so much longer than the other that one would have walked in a circle if he had not had a guide.

That battery which had been near the dugout kept on with its regular firing, its shells sweeping overhead. We had not gone far before we came to a board nailed to a tree with the caution, "Keep to the right!" If you went to the left you might be seen by the enemy, though we were seeing nothing of him, nor of our own trenches yet. Every square yard of this ground had been tried out by actual experience,

at the cost of dead and wounded men, till safe lanes of approach had been found.

Next was a clearing station, where the wounded are brought in from the trenches for transfer to ambulances. A glance at the burden on a stretcher just arriving automatically framed the word, "shell-fire!" The stains overrunning on tanned skin beyond the edges of the white bandage were a bright red in the sunlight. A khaki blouse torn open, or a trousers leg, or a sleeve cut down the seam, revealing the white of the first aid and a splash of red, means one man wounded; and by the ones the thousands come.

Fifty wounded men on the floor of a clearing station and the individual is lost in the crowd. When you see the one borne past, if there is nothing else to distract attention you always ask two questions: Will he die? Has he been maimed for life? If the answers to both are No, you feel a sense of triumph, as if you had seen a human play, built skilfully around a life to arouse your emotions, turn out happily.

The man has fought in an honourable cause; he has felt the very touch of death's fingers. How happy he is when he knows that he will get well! In prospect, as his wound heals into the scar which will be the lasting decoration of his courage, is home and all that it means and those in it mean to him. What kind of a home has he, this private soldier? In the slums, with a slattern wife? Or in a cottage with a flower garden in front, only a few minutes' walk from the green fields of the English countryside? — but we set out to tell you about the kind of inferno in which this man got his splash of red.

We come to the banks of a canal which has carried the traffic of the Low Countries for many centuries;

the canal where the British and French had fought many a Thermopylæ in the last eight months. Along its banks run rows of fine trees narrowing in perspective before the eye. Some have been cut in two by the direct hit of a heavy shell and others splintered down, bit by bit. Others still standing have been hit many times. There are cuts as fresh as if the chip had just flown from the axeman's blow, and there are scars from cuts made last autumn which nature's sap, rising as it does in the veins of wounded men, has healed while it sent forth leaves in answer to the call of spring from the remaining branches.

In this neighbourhood the earth is many-mouthed with caves and cut with passages running from cave to cave, so that the inhabitants may go and come hidden from sight. Jawbone and Hairyman and Lowbrow, of the stone age, would be at home here, squatting on their hunkers and tearing at their raw kill with their long incisors. It does not seem a place for men who walk erect, wear woven fabrics, enjoy a written language, and use soap and safety razors. One would not be surprised to see some figure swing down by a long, hairy arm from a branch of a tree and leap on all fours into one of the caves, where he would receive a gibbering welcome to the bosom of his family.

Not so! Huddled in these holes in the earth are free-born men of an old civilisation, who read the daily papers and eat jam on their bread. They do not want to be there, but they would not consider themselves worthy of the inheritance of free-born men if they were not. Only civilised man is capable of such stoicism as theirs. They have reverted to the cave-dweller's protection because their civilisation is

so highly developed that they can throw a piece of steel weighing anywhere from eighteen to two thousand pounds anywhere from five to twenty miles with merciless accuracy, and because the flesh of man is even more tender than in the cave-dweller's time, not to mention that his brain-case is a larger target.

An officer calls our attention to a shell-proof shelter with the civic pride of a member of a Chamber of Commerce pointing out the new Union Station.

"Not even a high explosive"— the kind that bursts on impact after penetration —"could get into that!" he says. "We make them for generals and colonels and those who have precious heads on their shoulders."

With material and labour, the same might have been constructed for the soldiers; which brings us back to the question of munitions in the economic balance against a human life. It was the first shelter of this kind which I had seen. One never goes up to the trenches without seeing something new. The defensive is tireless in its ingenuity in saving lives and the offensive in taking them. Safeguards and salvage compete with destruction. And what labour all that excavation and construction represented — the cumulative labour of months and day-by-day repairs of the damage done by shells. After a bombardment, dig out the filled trenches and renew the smashed dugouts to be ready for another go!

The walls of that communication trench were two feet above our heads. We noticed that all the men were in their dugouts; none were walking about in the open. One knew the meaning of this barometer — stormy. The German gunners were "strafing quite lively" this afternoon.

Already we had noticed many shells bursting five or six hundred yards away, in the direction of the new British trench; but at that distance they do not count. Then a railroad train seemed to have jumped the track and started to fly. Fortunately and unfortunately, sound travels faster than big shells of low velocity; fortunately, because it gives you time to be undignified in taking cover; unfortunately, because it gives you a fraction of a second to reflect whether or not that shell has your name and your number on Dugout Street. I was certain that it was a big shell, of the kind that will blow a dugout to pieces. Any one who had never heard a shell before would have "scrooched," as the small boys say, as instinctively as you draw back when the through express tears past the station. It is the kind of scream that makes you want to roll yourself into a package about the size of a pea, while you feel as tall and large as a cathedral, judged by the sensation that travels down your backbone.

Once I was being hoisted up a cliff in a basket, when the rope on the creaking windlass above slipped a few inches. Well, it is like that, or like taking a false step on the edge of a precipice. Is the clock about to strike twelve or not? Not this time! The burst was thirty yards away, along the path we had just traversed, and the sound of it was like the burst of a shell and like nothing else in the world, just as the swirling, boring, growing scream of a shell is like no other scream in the world. A gigantic hammerhead sweeps through the air and breaks a steel drumhead.

If we had come along half a minute later we should have had a better view, and perhaps now we should

have been on a bed in a hospital worrying how we were going to pay the rent, or in the place where, hopefully, we have no worries at all. Between walls of earth the report was deadened to our ears in the same way as a revolver report in an adjoining room; and not much earth had gone down the backs of our necks from the concussion.

Looking over the parapet, we saw a cloud of thick, black smoke; and we heard the outcry of a man who had been hit. That was all. The shell might have struck nearer without our having seen or heard any more. Shut in by the gallery walls, one knows as little of what happens in an adjoining cave as a clam buried in the sand knows of what is happening to a neighbour clam. A young soldier came half stumbling into the nearest dugout. He was shaking his head and batting his ears as if he had sand in them. Evidently he was returning to his home cave from a call on a neighbour which had brought him close to the burst.

"That must have been about six- or seven-inch," I said to the officer, trying to be moderate and casual in my estimate, which is the correct form on such occasions. My actual impression was forty-inch.

"Nine inch, h. e.," replied the expert. This was gratifying. It was the first time that I had been that near to a nine-inch shell explosion. Its "eat-'em-alive" frightfulness was depressing. But the experience was worth having. One wants all the experiences there are — but only "close." A delightful word that word close, at the front!

But the Germans were generous that afternoon. Another big scream seemed aimed at my own head.

L—— disagreed with me; he said that it was aimed at his. We did not argue the matter to the point of a personal quarrel, for it might have got both our heads. It burst back of the trench about as far away as the other shell. After all, a trench is a pretty narrow ribbon, even on a gunner's large scale map, to hit. It is wonderful how, firing at such long ranges, he is able to hit the trench at all.

This was all of the nine-inch style, for the time being. We got some fours and fives in our neighbourhood, as we walked along. Three bursting as near together as the ticks of a clock, made almost no smoke as they brought some tree-limbs down and tore away a section of a trunk. Then the thunder storm moved on to another part of the line. Only, unlike the thunder storms of nature, this, which is man-made and controlled as a fireman controls the nozzle of his hose, may sweep back again and yet again over its path. All depends upon the decision of a German artillery officer, just as whether or not a flower bed shall get another sprinkle depends upon the will of the gardener.

We were glad to turn out of the support trench into a communication trench leading toward the front trench; into another gallery cut deep in the fields, with scattered shell-pits on either side. Still more soldiers, leaning against the walls or seated with their legs stretched out across the bottom of the ditch; more waiting soldiers, only strung out in a line and as used to the passing of shells as people living along the elevated railroad line to the passing of trains. They did not look up at the screams boring the air any more than one who lives under the trains looks up every

time that one passes. Theirs was the passivity of a queue waiting in line before the entrance to a theatre or a ball-ground.

A senator or a lawyer, used to coolness in debate, or to presiding over great meetings, or to facing crowds, who happened to visit the trenches could have got reassurance from the faces of any one of these private soldiers, who had been trained not to worry about death till death came. Harrowing every one of these screams, taken by itself. Instinctively, unnecessarily, you dodged at those which were low — unnecessarily because they were from British guns. No danger from them unless there was a short fuse. To the soldiers, the low screams brought the delight of having blows struck from their side at the enemy, whom they themselves could not strike from their reserve position.

For we were under the curving sweep of both the British and the German shells, as they passed in the air on the way to their targets. It was like standing between two railroad tracks with trains going by in opposite directions. You came to differentiate between the multitudinous screams. "Ours!" you exclaimed, with the same delight as when you see that your side has the ball. The spirit of battle contest rose in you. There was an end of philosophy. These soldiers in the trenches were your partisans. Every British shell was working for them and for you, giving blow for blow.

The score of the contest of battle is in men down; in killed and wounded. For every man down on your side you want two men down on the enemy's. Sport ceases. It is the fight between a burglar with a revolver in his hand and a knife between his teeth; and

a wounded man brought along the trench, a visible, intimate proof of a hit by the enemy, calls for more and harder blows.

Looking over the parapet of the communication trench you saw fields, lifeless except for the singing birds in the wheat, who had also the spirit of battle. The more shells, the more they warble. It was always so on summer days. Between the screams you heard their full-pitched chorus, striving to make itself heard in competition with the song of German invasion and British resistance. Mostly, the birds seemed to take cover like mankind; but I saw one sweep up from the golden sea of ripening grain toward the men-brothers with their wings of cloth.

Was this real, or was it extravaganza? Painted airships and a painted summer sky? The audacity of those British airmen! Two of them were spotting the work of British guns by their shell-bursts and watching for gun-flashes which would reveal concealed German battery positions, and whispering results by wireless to their own batteries.

It is a great game. Seven or eight thousand feet high, directly over the British planes, is a single Taube cruising for the same purpose. It looks like a beetle with gossamer wings suspended from a light cloud. The British aviators are so low that the bull's-eye identification marks are distinctly visible to the naked eye. They are playing in and out, like the short stop and second baseman around second, there in the very arc of the passing shells from both sides fired at other targets. But scores of other shells are most decidedly meant for them. In the midst of a lacework of puffs of shrapnel bursts, which slowly spread in the still air, from the German anti-aircraft guns,

they dip and rise and turn in skilful dodging. At length, one retires for good; probably his planecloth has become too much like a sieve from shrapnel fragments to remain aloft longer.

Come down, Herr Taube, come down where we can have a shot at you! Get in the game! You can see better at the altitude of the British airmen! But Herr Taube always stays high — the Br'er Fox of the air. Of course, it was not so exciting as the pictures that artists draw, but it was real.

Every kind of shell was being fired, low and high velocity, small and large calibre. One-two-three-four in quick succession as the roll of a drum, four German shells burst in line up in the region where we have made ourselves masters of the German trench. British shells responded.

"Ours again!"

But I had already ducked before I spoke, as you might if a pellet of steel weighing a couple of hundred pounds, going at the rate of a thousand yards a second or more, passed within a few yards of your head — ducked to find myself looking into the face of a soldier, who was smiling. The smile was not scornful, but it was at least amused at the expense of the sightseer, who had dodged one of our own shells. In addition to the respirators in case of a possible gas attack, supplied by that staff officer with a twinkle in his eye, we needed a steel rod fastened to the back of our necks and running down our spinal columns in order to preserve our dignity.

We were witnessing what is called the "artillery preparation for an infantry attack," which was to try to recover that two hundred yards of trench from the British. Only the Germans did not limit their atten-

tion to the lost trench alone. It was hottest there around the bend of our line, from our view-point; for there they must maul the trench into formless *débris* and cut the barbed wire in front of it before the charge was made.

"They touch up all the trenches in the neighbourhood to keep us guessing," said the officer, "before they make their final concentration. So it's pretty thick around this part."

"Which might include the communication trench?"

"Certainly. This makes a good line shot. No doubt they will spare us a few when they think it is our turn. We do the same thing. So it goes."

From the variety of screams of big shells and little shells and screams harrowingly close and reassuringly high, which were indicated as ours, one was warranted in suggesting that the British were doing considerable artillery preparation themselves.

"We must give them as good as they send — and more."

More seemed correct.

"Those close ones you hear are doubtless meant for the front German trench, which accounts for their low trajectory; the others for their support trenches or any battery positions that our planes have located."

We could not see where the British shells were striking. We could judge only of the accuracy of some of the German fire. Considering the storm being visited on the support trench which we had just left, we were more than ever glad to be out of it. Artillery is the war burglar's jimmy; but it has to batter the house into ruins and smash all the plate and blow up the safe and kill most of the family before the burglar can enter. Clouds of dust rose from

the explosions; limbs of trees were lopped off by tornadoes of steel hail.

"There! Look at that tree!"

In front of a portion of the British support trench a few of a line of stately shade trees were still standing. A German shell, about an eight-inch, one judged, struck fairly in the trunk of one about the same height from the ground as the lumberman sinks his axe in the bark. The shimmer of hot gas spread out from the point of explosion. Through it as through an aureole one saw that twelve inches of green wood had been cut in two as neatly as a thistle stem is severed by a sharp blow from a walking-stick. The body of the tree was carried across the splintered stump with crushing impact from the power of its flight, plus the power of the burst of the explosive charge which broke the shell-jacket into slashing fragments; and the towering column of limbs, branches, and foliage laid its length on the ground with a majestic dignity. Which shows what one shell can do, one of three which burst in the neighbourhood at the same time. In time, the shells would get all the trees; make them into chips and splinters and toothpicks.

"I'd rather that it would hit a tree-trunk than my trunk," said L——.

"But you would not have got it as badly as the tree," said the officer reassuringly. "The substance would have been too soft for sufficient impact for a burst. It would have gone right through!"

# XXIII

## MORE BEST DAY

"Without any anæsthetic"— Tea at a dugout — Over the wires "German West Africa fallen"— Playing with death — A tragedy — Travelling the "narrow cut of earth"— Good manners of the trenches — And democracy —"The men who will rule England"— A periscope glance at the German trench — A "direct hit" for the British —"Bombing up ahead!"— A gas shell — Under heavy fire — "Like beating up grouse to the guns and we are the birds"— Crash! — And safe again! — A "dead heat" to cover — A touch of "nerves"— Back to the dead land behind the trenches.

At battalion headquarters in the front trenches the battalion surgeon had just amputated an arm which had been mauled by a shell.

"Without any anæsthetic," he explained. "No chance if we sent him back to the hospital. He would die on the way. Stood it very well. Already chirking up."

A family practitioner at home, the doctor, when the war began, had left his practice to go with his Territorial battalion. He retains the family practitioner's cheery, assuring manner. He is the kind of man who makes you feel better immediately he comes into the sick-room; who has already made you forget yourself when he puts his finger on your pulse. There are thousands of that kind at home. Probably you have sent a hurry telephone call for his like more than once.

"The same thing that we might have done in the Crimea," he continued, "only we have antiseptics

now. It's wonderful how little you can work with and how excellent the results. Strong, healthy men, these, with great recuperative power and discipline and resolution — very different patients from those we usually operate on."

Tea was served inside the battalion commander's dugout. Tea is as essential every afternoon to the British as ice to the average American in summer. They don't think of getting on without it if they can possibly have it, and it is part of the rations. As well take cigarettes away from those who smoke as tea from the British soldier.

It was very much like tea outside the trenches, so far as any signs of perturbation about shells and casualties were concerned. In that the battalion commander had to answer telegrams, it had the aspect of a busy man's sandwich at his desk for luncheon. Good news to cheer the function had just come over the network of wires which connects up the whole army, from trenches to headquarters — good news in the midst of the shells.

German West Africa had fallen. Botha, who was fighting against the British fifteen years ago, had taken it fighting for the British. A suggestive thought that. It is British character that brings enemies like Botha into the fold; the old, good-natured, sportsmanlike, live-and-let-live idea, which has something to do with keeping the United States intact. A board with the news on it in German was put up over the British trenches. Naturally, the board was shot full of holes; for it is clear that the Germans are not yet ready to come into the British Empire.

"Hans and Jacob we have named them," said the colonel, referring to two Germans who were buried

back of his dugout. "It's dull up here when the *Boches* are not shelling, so we let our imaginations play. We hold conversations with Hans and Jacob in our long watches. Hans is fat and cheerful and trusting. He believes everything that the Kaiser tells him and has a cheerful disposition. But Jacob is a professor and a fearful 'strafer.' It seems a little gruesome, doesn't it, but not after you have been in the trenches for a while."

A little gruesome — true! Not in the trenches — true, too! Where all is satire, no incongruity seems out of place. Life plays in and out with death; they intermingle; they look each other in the face and say, "I know you. We dwell together. Let us smile when we may, at what we may, to hide the character of our comradeship; for to-morrow —"

Only half an hour before one of the officers had been shot through the head by a sniper. He was a popular officer. The others had messed with him and marched with him and known him in the fulness of affection of comradeship in arms and dangers shared. A heartbreak for some home in England. No one dwelt on the incident. What was there to say? The trembling lip, trembling in spite of itself, was the only outward sign of the depth of feeling that words could not reflect, at tea in the dugout. The subject was changed to something about the living. One must carry on cheerfully; one must be on the alert; one must play his part serenely, unflinchingly, for the sake of the nerves around him and for his own sake. Such fortitude becomes automatic, it would seem. Please, I must not hesitate about having a slice of cake. They managed cake without any difficulty up there in the trenches. And who if not

men in the trenches was entitled to cake, I should like to know?

"It was here that he was hit," another officer said, as we moved on in the trench. "He was saying that the sandbags were a little weak there and a bullet might go through and catch a man, who thought himself safely under cover as he walked along. He had started to fix the sandbags himself when he got it. The bullet came right through the top of one of the bags in front of him."

A bullet makes the merciful wound; and a bullet through the head is a simple way of going. The bad wounds come mostly from shells; but there is something about seeing any one hit by a sniper which is more horrible. It is a cold-blooded kind of killing, more suggestive of murder, this single shot from a sharpshooter waiting as patiently as a cat for a mouse, aimed definitely to take the life of one man.

Again we move on in that narrow cut of earth with its waiting soldiers, which the world knows so well from reading tours of the trenches. No one not on watch might show his head on an afternoon like this. The men were prisoners between those walls of earth; not even spectators of what the guns were doing; simply moles. They took it all as a part of the day's work, with that singular, redoubtable combination of British phlegm and cheerfulness.

Of course, some of them were eating bread and marmalade and making tea. Where all the marmalade goes which Mr. Atkins uses for his personal munition in fighting the Germans puzzles the Army Service Corps, whose business it is to see that he is never without it. How could he sit so calmly under shell-fire without marmalade? Never! He would

get fidgetty and forget his lesson, I am sure, like the boy who had the button which he was used to fingering removed before he went to recite.

Any minute a shell may come. Mr. Atkins does not think of that. Time enough to think after it has arrived. Then perhaps the burial party will be doing your thinking for you; or if not, the doctors and the nurses who look after you will.

I noted certain acts of fellowship of comrades who are all in the same boat and have learned unselfishness. When they got up to let you pass and you smiled your thanks, you received a much pleasanter smile in return than you will from many a well-fed gentleman, who has to stand aside to let you enter a restaurant. The manners of the trenches are good, better than in many places where good manners are a cult.

There is no better place to send a spoiled, undisciplined, bumptious youth than to a British trench. He would learn that there are other men in the world besides himself and that a shell can kill a rich brute or a selfish brute as readily as a poor man. Democracy there is in the trenches; the democracy where all men are in the presence of death and "hazing" parties need not be organised among the students.

But there is another and a greater element in the practical psychology of the trenches. These good-natured men, fighting the bitterest kind of warfare, without the signs of brutality which we associate with the prize fighter and the bully in their faces, know why they are fighting. They consider that their duty is in that trench, and that they could not have a title to manhood if they were not there. After the war the men who have been in the trenches will rule Eng-

land. Their spirit and their thinking will fashion the new trend of civilisation, and the men who have not fought will bear the worst scars from the war.

Ridiculous it is that men should be moles, perhaps; but at the same time there is something sublime in the fellowship of their courage and purpose, as they "sit and take it," or guard against attacks, without the passion of battle of the old days of excited charges and quick results, and watch the toll pass by from hour to hour. Borne by comrades pickaback we saw the wounded carried along that passage too narrow for a litter. A splash of blood, a white bandage, a limp form!

For the second permissible — periscopes are tempting targets — I looked through one over the top of the parapet. Another film! A big British lyddite shell went crashing into the German parapet. The dust from sandbags and dugouts merged into an immense cloud of ugly, black smoke. As the cloud rose, one saw the figure of a German dart out of sight; then nothing was visible but the gap which the explosion has made. No wise German would show himself there. British snipers were watching for him. At least half a dozen, perhaps a score, of men had been put out by this single "direct hit" of an h. e. (high explosive). Yes, the British gunners were shooting well, too. Other periscopic glimpses proved it.

Through the periscope we learned also that the two lines of sandbags of German and British trenches were drawing nearer together. Another wounded man was brought by.

"They're bombing up ahead. He has just been hit by a bomb."

As we drew aside to make room for him to pass, once more the civilian realised his helplessness and unimportance. One soldier was worth ten Prime Ministers in that place. We were as conspicuously *mal à propos* as an outsider at a bank directors' meeting or in a football scrimmage. The officer politely reminded us of the necessity of elbow room in the narrow quarters for the bombers, who were hidden from view by the zigzag traverses, and I was not sorry, though perhaps my companions were. If so, they did not say so, not being talkative men. We were not going to see that two hundred yards of captured trench that was beyond the bombing action, after all. Oh, the twinkle in that staff officer's eye!

"A *Boche* gas shell!" we were told, as we passed an informal excavation in the communication trench on our way back. "Asphyxiating effect. No time to put on respirators when one explodes. Laid out half a dozen men like fish, gasping for air, but they will recover."

"The *Boches* want us to hurry!" exclaimed L——.

They were giving the communication trench a turn at "strafing," now, and shells were urgently dropping behind us. There was no use of trying to respond to one's natural inclination to run away from the pursuing shower when you had to squeeze past soldiers as you went.

"But look at what we are going into! This is like beating up grouse to the guns, and we are the birds! I am wondering if I like it."

We could tell what had happened in our absence in the support trench by the litter of branches and leaves and by the excavations made by shells. It was still happening, too. Another nine-inch, with your only

view of your surroundings the wall of earth which you hugged. Crash — and safe again!

"Pretty!" L—— said, smiling. He was referring to the cloud of black smoke from the burst. Pretty is a favourite word of his. I find that men use habitual exclamations on such occasions. R——, also smiling, had said, "A black business, this!" a favourite expression with him.

"Yet — pretty!" R—— and I exclaimed together.

L—— took a sliver off his coat and offered it to us as a souvenir. He did not know that he had said "Pretty!" or R—— that he had said "A black business!" several times that afternoon; nor did I know that I had exclaimed "For the love of Mike!" Psychologists take notice; and golfers are reminded that their favourite expletives when they foozle will come perfectly natural to them when the Germans are "strafing." Then another nine-inch, when we were out of the gallery in front of the warrens. My companions happened to be near a dugout. They did not go in tandem, but abreast. It was a "dead heat." All that I could see in the way of cover was a wall of sandbags, which looked about as comforting as tissue paper in such a crisis.

At least, one faintly realised what it meant to be in the support trenches, where the men were still huddled in their caves. They never get a shot at the enemy or a chance to throw a bomb, unless they are sent forward to assist the front trenches in resisting an attack. It is for this purpose that they are kept within easy reach of the front trenches. They are like the prisoner tied to a chair-back, facing a gun.

"Yes, this was pretty heavy shell-fire," said an officer, who ought to know. "Not so bad as on the

trenches which the infantry are to attack — that is the first degree. You might call this the second."

It was heavy enough to keep any writer from being bored. The second degree will do. We will leave the first till another time.

Later, when we were walking along a paved road, I heard what seemed the siren call of another nine-inch. Once, in another war, I had been on a paved road when — well, I did not care to be on this one if a nine-inch hit it and turned fragments of paving-stones into projectiles. An effort to "run out the bunt"— Cæsar's ghost! It was one of our own shells! Nerves! Shame! Two stretcher-bearers with a wounded man looked up in surprise, wondering what kind of a hide-and-seek game we were playing. They made a picture of imperturbability of the kind that is a cure for nerves under fire. If the other fellow is not scared it does not do for you to be scared.

"Did you get any shells in your neighbourhood?" we asked the chauffeur — also British and imperturbable — whom we found waiting at a clearing station for wounded.

"Yes, sir, I saw several, but none hit the car."

As we came to the first cross-roads in that dead land back of the trenches which was still being shelled by shrapnel, though not another car was in sight and ours had no business there (as we were told afterward), that chauffeur, as he slowed up before turning, held out his hand from habit as he would have done in Piccadilly.

Two or three days later things were normal along the front again, with Mr. Atkins still stuffing himself with marmalade in that two hundred yards of trench.

# XXIV

## WINNING AND LOSING

The Western front: a pulsating, changing line — Offensive with the British — The buoyant youth of England — Not a "good show" — English sportsmanship — A successful battalion — Psychology of the charge — "Here we are again!" — Stories of the capture — The "Keetcheenaires" — An army in the making.

SEEMING an immovable black line set as a frontier in peace, that Western front on your map which you bought early in the war in anticipation of rearranging the flags in keeping with each day's news was, in reality, a pulsating, changing line.

At times one thought of it as an enormous rope under the constant pressure of soldiers on either side, who now and then, with an "all together" of a tug of war at a given point, straightened or made a bend, with the result imperceptible except as you measured it by a tree or a house. Battles as severe as the most important in South Africa, battles severe enough to have decided famous campaigns in Europe in older days, when one king rode forth against another, became the landmark incidents of the give and take, the wrangling and the wrestling of siege operations.

The sensation of victory or defeat for those engaged became none the less vivid because victory meant the gain of so little ground and defeat the loss of so little; perhaps the more vivid in want of the movement of pursuing or of being pursued in the shock of arms in past times when an army front hardly covered that of one brigade in the trenches. For win-

ners and losers returning to their billets in French villages, as other battalions took their places, had time to think over the action.

The offensive was mostly with the British through the summer of 1915; any thrust by the Germans was usually to retake a section of trenches which they had lost. But our attacks did not all succeed, of course. Battalions knew success and failure; and their narratives were mine to share, just as one would share the good luck or the bad luck of his neighbours.

You may have a story of heartbreak or triumph an hour after you have been chatting with playing children in a village street, as the car speeds toward the zone where the reserves are billeted and the occasional shell is warning that peace is behind you. First, one alights near the headquarters of two battalions which have been in an attack that failed. The colonel of the one to the left of the road was killed. We go across the fields to the right. Among the surviving officers resting in their shelter tents, where there is plenty of room now, is the adjutant, tall, boyish, looking tired, but still with no outward display of what he has gone through and what it has meant to him. I have seen him by the hundreds, this buoyant type of English youth. The colonel comes out of the farmhouse and he sends for some other officers.

In army language, theirs had not been a "good show." We had heard the account of it with that matter-of-fact prefix from G. H. Q., where they took results with the necessarily cold eye of logic. The two battalions were set to take a trench; that was all. In the midst of merciless shell-fire they had waited for their own guns to draw all the teeth out of the trench. When the given moment came they swept forward.

But our artillery had not "connected up" properly.

The German machine guns were not out of commission, and for them it was like working a loom playing the bullets back and forth across the zone of a hundred yards which the British had to traverse. The British had been told to charge and they charged. Theirs not to reason why; that was the glory of the thing. Nothing more gallant in warfare than their persistence, till they found that it was like trying to swim in a cataract of lead. One officer got within fifty yards of the German parapet before he fell. At last they realised that it could not be done — later than they should, but they were a proud regiment and though they had been too brave, there was something splendid about it.

With a soldier's winning frankness and simplicity they told what had happened. Even before they charged they knew the machine guns were in place; they knew what they had to face. One spoke of seeing, as they lay waiting, a German officer standing up in the midst of the British shell-fire.

"A stout-hearted fighter! We had to admire him!" said the adjutant.

It was a chivalrous thought with a deep appeal, considering what he had been through. Oh, these English! They will not hate; they cannot be separated from their sense of sportsmanship.

It was not the first time the guns had not "connected up" for either side, and German charges on many occasions had met a like fate. Calm enough, these officers, true to their birthright of phlegm. They did not make excuses. Success is the criterion of battle. They had failed. Their unblinking recognition of the fact was a sort of self-punishment

which cut deep into your own sensitiveness. One young lieutenant could not keep his lip from trembling over that naked, grim thought. The pride of regiment had been struck a whip-blow which meant more to the soldier than any injury to his personal pride.

But next time! They wanted another try for that trench, these survivors. No matter about anything else — the battalion must have another chance. You appreciated this from a few words and more from the stubborn resolution in the bearing of all. There was no "let-us-at-'em-again" frightfulness. In order to end this war you must "lick" one side or the other, and these men were not "licked." One was sorry that he had gone to see them. It was like lacerating a wound. One could only assure them, in his faith in their gallantry, that they would win next time. And oh, how you wanted them to win! They deserved to win because they were such manly losers.

At home in their rough wooden houses in camp we found a battalion which had won — the same undemonstrative type as the one that had lost; the same simplicity and kindly hospitality which gives life at the front a charm in the midst of its tragedy, from these men of one of the dependable line regiments. This colonel knew the other colonel, and he said about the other what his fellow-officers had said: it was not his fault; he was a good man. If the guns were not "on," what happened to him was bound to happen to anybody. They had been "on" for the winning battalion; perfectly "on." They had buried the machine guns and the Germans with them.

When a man goes into the kind of charge that either battalion made he gives himself up for lost. The psychology is simple. You are going to keep on

until — ! Well, as Mr. Atkins has remarked in his own terse way, a battle was a lot of noise all around you and suddenly a big bang in your ear; and then somebody said, "Please open your mouth and take this!" and you found yourself in a white, silent place full of cots.

The winning battalion was amazed how easily the thing was done. They had "walked in." They were a little surprised to be alive — thanks to the guns. "Here we are! Here we are again!" as the song at the front goes. It is all a lottery. Make up your mind to draw the death number; and if you don't, that is velvet. Army courage these days is highly sensitised steel in response to will.

They had won; there was a credit mark in the regimental record. All had won; nobody in particular, but the battalion, the lot of them. They did not boast about it. The thing just happened. They were alive and enjoying the sheer fact of life, writing letters home, re-reading letters from home, looking at the pictures in the illustrated papers, as they leaned back and smoked their briar-wood pipes and discussed politics with that freedom and directness of opinion which is an Englishman's pastime and his birthright.

The captain who was describing the fight had retired from the army, gone into business, and returned as a reserve officer. The guns were to stop firing at a given moment. As the minute-hand lay over the figure on his wrist watch he dashed for the broken parapet, still in the haze of dust from the shell-bursts, to find not a German in sight. All were under cover. He enacted the ridiculous scene with humorous appreciation of how he came face to face with a German

as he turned a traverse. He was ready with his revolver and the other was not, and the other was his prisoner.

There was nothing grewsome about listening to a diffident soldier explaining how he "bombed them out," and you shared his amusement over the surprise of a German who stuck his head out of a dugout within a foot of the face of a British soldier, who was peeping inside to see if any more *Boches* were at home. You rejoiced with this battalion. Victory is sweet.

When on the way back to quarters you passed some of the New Army men, "the Keetcheenaires," as the French call them, you were reminded of how, although the war was old, the British army was young. There was a "Watch our city grow!" atmosphere about it. Little by little, some great force seems steadily pushing up from the rear. It made that business institution at G. H. Q. feel like bankers with an enormous, increasing surplus. In this the British is like no other army. One has watched it in the making.

# XXV

## THE MAPLE LEAF FOLK

Canadians at the front — Home folks to the American — One touch of New York slang — Hustlers — The discipline of self-reliance — Charging through gas — Our bond with the Canadians — Their optimism and sentiment — The Princess Pats — Holding down the lid of hell — The second battle of Ypres — The Story of May Eighth — Holding a salient — The Germans prepare to attack — The marksmen of the P. P's — Down go the Germans — The attack broken — Official record of the struggle — Machine guns buried — Reinforcements and ammunition — The third and severest charge — Seventy-five per cent. casualties — The P. P's, "regulars" — Modern knights.

THESE were home folks to the American. You might know all by their maple leaf symbol; but even before you saw that, with its bronze none too prominent against the khaki, you knew those who were not recent emigrants from England to Canada by their accent and by certain slang phrases which pay no customs duty at the border.

When, on a dark February night cruising in a slough of a road, I heard out of a wall of blackness back of the trenches, "Gee! Get onto the bus!" which referred to our car, and also, "Cut out the noise!" I was certain that I might dispense with an interpreter. After I had remarked that I came from New York, which is only across the street from Montreal as distances go in our countries, the American batting about the front at midnight was welcomed with a "glad hand" across that imaginary line which has and ever shall have no fortresses.

What a strange place to find Canadians — at the front in Europe! I could never quite accommodate myself to the wonder of a man from Winnipeg, and perhaps a "neutral" from Wyoming in his company, fighting Germans in Flanders. A man used to a downy couch and an easy-chair by the fire and steam-heated rooms, who had ten thousand a year in Toronto, when you found him in a chill, damp cellar of a peasant's cottage in range of the enemy's shells was getting something more novel, if not more picturesque, than dog-mushing and prospecting on the Yukon; for that contrast we are quite used to.

All I asked of the Canadians was to allow a little of the glory they had won — they had won such a lot — to rub off on their neighbours. If there must be war, and no Canadian believed in it as an institution, why, to my mind, the Canadians did a fine thing for civilisation's sake. It hurt sometimes to think that we also could not be in the fight for the good cause, too, particularly after the *Lusitania* was sunk, when my own feelings had lost all semblance to neutrality.

The Canadians enlivened life at the front; for they have a little more zip to them than the thoroughgoing British. Their climate spells "hustle," and we are all the product of climate to a large degree, whether in England, on the Mississippi flatlands, or in Manitoba. Eager and highstrung the Canadian born, quick to see and act. Very restless they were when held up on Salisbury Plain, after they had come three-four-five-six thousand miles to fight and there was nothing but mud in an English winter to fight.

One from the American continent knew what ailed them; they wanted action. They may have seemed

undisciplined to a drill sergeant; but the kind of discipline they needed was a sight of the real thing. They wanted to know, What for? And Lord Kitchener was kinder to them, though many were beginners, than to his own new army; he could be, as they had their guns and equipment ready. So he sent them over to France before it was too late in the spring to get frozen feet from standing in icy water looking over a parapet at a German parapet. They liked Flanders mud better than Salisbury Plain mud, because it meant that there was "something doing."

It was in their first trenches that I first saw them, and they were "on the job, all right," in face of scattered shell-fire and the sweep of the searchlights and the flares. They had become the most ardent of pupils, for here was that real thing which steadied them and proved their metal. They refashioned their trenches and drained them with the fastidiousness of good housekeepers, who had a frontiersman's experience for an inheritance. In a week they appeared to be old hands at the business.

"Their discipline is different from ours," said a British general, "but it works out. They are splendid. I ask for no better troops."

They may have lacked the etiquette of discipline of British regulars, but they had the natural discipline of self-reliance and of "go to it" when a crisis came. This trench was only an introduction, a preparation for a thing which was about as real as ever fell to the lot of any soldiers. It is not for me to tell here the story of their part in the second battle of Ypres when the gas fumes rolled in upon them. I should like to tell it and also the story of the deeds of many British regiments, from the time of Mons

to Festubert. All Canada knows it in detail from their own correspondents and their record officer. England will one day know about her regiments; her stubborn regiments of the line, her county regiments, who have won the admiration of all the crack regiments, whether English or Scots.

"When that gas came along," said one Canadian, who expressed the Canadian spirit, "we knew the *Boches* were springing a new one on us. You know how it is if a man is hit in the face by a cloud of smoke when he is going into a burning building to get somebody out. He draws back — and then he goes in. We went in. We charged — well, it was the way we felt about it. We wanted to get at them and we were boiling mad over such a dastardly kind of attack."

Higher authorities than any civilian have testified to how that charge helped, if it did not save the situation. And then at Givenchy — straight work into the enemy's trenches under the guns. Canada is a part of the British Empire and a precious part; but the Canadians, all imperial politics aside, fought their way into the affections of the British army, if they did not already possess it. They made the Rocky Mountains seem more majestic and the Thousand Islands more lovely.

If there are some people in the United States busy with their own affairs who look on the Canadians as living up north somewhere toward the Arctic Circle and not very numerous, that old criterion of merit which discovers in the glare of battle's publicity merit which already existed has given to the name Canadian a glory which can be appreciated only with the perspective of time. The Civil War left us a martial

tradition; they have won theirs. Some day a few of their neutral neighbours, who fought by their side will be joining in their army reunions and remarking, "Wasn't that mud in Flanders —" etc.

My thanks to the Canadians for being at the front. They brought me back to the plains and the Northwest, and they showed the Germans on some occasions what a blizzard is like when expressed in bullets instead of in snowflakes, by men who know how to shoot. I had continental pride in them. They had the dry, pungent philosophy and the indomitable optimism which the air of the plains and the St. Lawrence Valley seems to develop. They were not afraid to be a little emotional and sentimental. There is room for that sort of thing between Vancouver and Halifax. They had been in some "tough scraps" which they saw clear-eyed, as they would see a boxing-match or a spill from a canoe into a Canadian rapids.

As for the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, all old soldiers of the South African campaign almost without exception, knowing and hardened, their veteran experience gave them an earlier opportunity in the trenches than the first Canadian division. Brigaded with British regulars, the Princess Pats were a sort of *corps d'élite*. Colonel Francis Farquhar, known as "Fanny," was their colonel, and he knew his men. After he was killed his spirit remained with them. Asked if they could stick, they said, "Yes, sir!" cheerily, as he would have wanted them to say it.

I am going to tell you about the work of the Princess Pats on May 8th, not to single them out from any other regiment, but because it is typical of the kind of fighting which many another regiment has

known and I have it in illustrative detail. Losses, day by day losses, characteristic of trench warfare, they had previously suffered in holding a difficult salient at St. Eloi — losses that added up into the hundreds. Heretofore as one of them said, they had been holding down the lid of hell, but on May 8th they were to hold on to the edge of the opening by the skin of their teeth and look down into the bowels of hell after the Germans had blown off the lid with high explosives.

It was in a big château that I first heard the story and felt the thrill of it told by the tongues of its participants. There were twenty bedrooms in that château. If I wished to stay all night I might occupy three or four — and as for that bathroom, paradise to men who have been buried in filthy mud by high explosives, the Frenchman who planned it had the most spacious ideas in immersions. A tub or a shower or a hose as you pleased. Some bathroom, that!

For nothing in the British army was too good for the Princess Pats before May 8th; and since May 8th nothing was quite good enough. Five of us sat down to dinner in a banquet hall looking out on a private park, big enough to hold fifty. The talk ran fast.

"Too bad Gault is not here. He's in England recovering from his wound. Gault is six feet tall and five feet of him legs. All day in that trench with a shell wound in his thigh and arm. God! How he was suffering! But not a moan — his face twitching and trying to make the twitch into a smile — and telling us to stick."

"Buller away, too. He was the second in command. Gault succeeded him. Buller was hit on

May 5th — and missed the big show — piece of shell in the eye."

"And Charlie Stewart, who was shot through the stomach. How we miss him. If ever there were a 'live-wire' it's Charlie. Up or down, he's smiling and ready for the next adventure. Once he made thirty thousand dollars in the Yukon — and spent it on the way to Vancouver. The first job he could get was washing dishes — but he wasn't washing them long. Again he started out in the Northwest on an expedition with four hundred traps to cut into the fur business of the Hudson's Bay Company. His Indians got sick; he wouldn't desert them — and before he was through he had a time which beat anything yet opened up for us by the Germans in Flanders — but you have heard such stories from the Northwest before. Being shot through the stomach the way he was all the doctors agreed that Charlie would die. It was like Charlie to disagree with them. He always has his own point of view. So he is getting well. Charlie came out to the war with the packing-case which had been used by his grandfather, who was an officer in the Crimean War. He said that it would bring him luck."

The 4th of May was bad enough — a ghastly forerunner for the 8th. On the 4th the P. P's, after having been under shell-fire throughout the second battle of Ypres — the "gas battle" — were ordered forward to a new line to the southeast of Ypres. To the north of Ypres the British line had been driven back by the concentration of shell-fire and the rolling, deadly march of the clouds of asphyxiating gas.

The Germans were still determined to take the town which they had showered with four million dol-

lars' worth of shells. It would be big news — the fall of Ypres as a prelude to the fall of Przemysl and of Lemberg. A wicked salient was produced in the British line to the southeast by the cave-in to the north. It seems to be the lot of the P. P's to get into salients. On the 4th they lost 28 men killed and 98 wounded from a gruelling all-day shell-fire and stone-walling. That night they got relief and were out for two days, when they were back in the front trenches again. The 5th and the 6th were fairly quiet; that is, what the P. P's or Mr. Thomas Atkins would call quiet. Average mortals wouldn't. They would try to appear unconcerned and say they had been under pretty heavy fire — which means shells all over the place and machine guns combing the parapet. Very dull, indeed. Only three men killed and seventeen wounded.

On the night of May 7th the P. P's had a muster of 635 men. This was a good deal less than half of the original total in the battalion, including recruits who had come out to fill the gaps caused by death, wounds and sickness. Bear in mind that before this war a force was supposed to prepare for retreat with a loss of ten per cent. and get under way to the rear with the loss of fifteen per cent., and that with the loss of thirty per cent. it was supposed to have borne all that can be expected of the best trained soldiers.

The Germans were quiet that night — suggestively quiet. At 4.30 the prelude began; by 5.30 the German gunners had fairly warmed to their work. They were using every kind of shell they had in the locker. Every signal wire the P. P's possessed had been cut. The brigade commander could not know what was

happening to them and they could not know his wishes — except that it may be taken for granted that the orders of any British brigade commander are always to "stick it."

The shell-fire was as thick at the P. P.'s backs as in front of them. They were fenced in by shell-fire. And they were infantry taking what the guns gave in order to put them out of business so that the way would be clear for the German infantry to charge. In theory they ought to have been buried and mangled beyond the power of resistance by what is called "the artillery preparation for the infantry in attack."

Every man of the P. P's knew what was coming. There was relief in their hearts when they saw the Germans break from their trenches and start down the slope of the hill in front. Now they could take it out of the German infantry in payment for what the German guns were doing to them. This was their only thought. Being good shots, with the instinct of the man who is used to shooting at game, the P. P's "shoot to kill" and at individual targets. The light green of the German uniform is more visible on the deep green background of spring grass and foliage than against the tints of autumn.

At two or three or four hundred yards no one of the marksmen of the P. P's, and there were several said to be able to "shoot the eye off an ant," could miss the target. As for Corporal Christy, the old bear hunter of the Northwest, he leaned out over the parapet when a charge began because he could shoot better in that position. They kept on knocking down Germans; they didn't know that men around them were being hit; they hardly knew that they were being

shelled except when a burst shook their aim or filled their eyes with dust. In that case they wiped the dust out of their eyes and went on. The first that many of them realised that the German attack was broken was when they saw green blots in front of the standing figures — which were now going in the other direction. Then the thing was to keep as many of these as possible from getting back over the hill. After that they could dress the wounded and make the dying a little more comfortable. For there was no getting the wounded to the rear. They had to remain there in the trench perhaps to be wounded again, spectators of their comrades' valour without the preoccupation of action.

In the official war journal where a battalion keeps its records — that precious historical document which will be safeguarded in fireproof vaults one of these days — you may read in cold official language what happened in one section of the British line on the 8th of May. Thus:

"7 A. M. Fire trench on right blown in at several points. . . . 9 A. M. Lieutenants Martin and Triggs were hit and came out of left communicating trench with number of wounded. . . . Captain Still and Lieut. de Bay hit also. . . . 9.30 A. M. All machine guns were buried (by high explosive shells) but two were dug out and mounted again. A shell killed every man in one section. . . . 10.30 A.M. Lieut. Edwards was killed. . . . Lieutenant Crawford, who was most gallant, was severely wounded. . . . Captain Adamson, who had been handing out ammunition, was hit in the shoulder, but continued to work with only one arm useful. . . . Sergeant-Major Frazer, who was also handing out ammunition

to support trenches, was killed instantly by a bullet in the head."

At 10.30 only four officers remained fit for action. All were lieutenants. The ranking one of these was Niven, in command after Gault was wounded at 7 A. M. We have all met the Niven type anywhere from the Gulf of Mexico to the Arctic Circle, the high-strung, wiry type, who moves about too fast to carry any loose flesh and accumulates none because he does move about so fast. A little man Niven, a rancher, a horseman, with a good education and a knowledge of men. He rather fits the old saying about licking his weight in wild cats — wild cats being nearer his size than lions or tigers.

Eight months before he had not known any more about war than thousands of other Canadians of his type, except that soldiers carried rifles over their shoulders and kept step. But he had "Fanny" Farquhar of the British army for his teacher; and he studied the book of war in the midst of shells and bullets — which means that the lessons stick in the same way as the lesson the small boy receives when he touches the red-hot end of a poker to see how it feels.

Writing in the midst of ruined trenches rocked by the concussion of shells, every message he sent that day, every report he made by orderly after the wires were down was written out very explicitly — which Farquhar had taught him was the army way. The record is there of his coolness when the lid was blown off of hell. For all you can tell by the firm chirography he might have been sending a note to a ranch foreman.

After his communications were cut, he was not cer

tain how much support he had on his flanks. It looked for a time as if he had none. After the first charge was repulsed he made contact with the King's Royal Rifle Corps on his right. He knew from the nature of the first German charge that the second would be worse than the first. The Germans had advanced some machine guns; they would be able to place their increased artillery fire more accurately. Again green figures started down that hill and again they were put back. Then Niven was able to establish contact with the Shropshire Light Infantry, another regiment on his left. So he knew that right and left he was supported — and by seasoned British regulars. This was very, very comforting — especially so when German machine gun fire was not only coming from the front but in enfilade — which is so trying to a soldier's steadiness. In other words, the P. P's were shooting at Germans in front while bullets were whipping crosswise of their trenches and of the regulars on their flanks, too. Some of the German infantrymen who had not been hit or had not fallen back had dug themselves cover and were firing at a closer range.

The Germans had located the points in the P. P's' trench occupied by the machine guns. At least, they could put these hornets' nests out of business, if not all the individual riflemen. So they concentrated high explosive shells on them. That did the trick; it buried them. But a buried machine gun may be dug out and fired again. It may be dug out two or three times and keep on firing as long as it will work and there is any one to man it.

While the machine guns were being exhumed every man in one sector of the trench was killed. Then the

left half of the right fire trench got three or four shells one after another bang into it. There was no trench left: only macerated earth and mangled men. Those emerging alive were told to fall back to the communicating trench. Next the right end of the left fire trench was blown in. When the survivors fell back to the communication trench that was also blown in their face.

"Oh, but we were having a merry party," as Lieutenant Vandenberg said.

Niven and his lieutenants were moving here and there to the point of each new explosion to ascertain the amount of the damage and to decide what was to be done as the result. One soldier described Niven's eyes as sparks emitted from two holes in his dust-caked face.

Papineau tells how a tree outside the trench was cut in two by a shell and its trunk laid across the breach of the trench caused by another shell; and lying over the trunk limp and lifeless where he had fallen was a man killed by still another shell.

"I remember how he looked because I had to step around him and over the trunk," said Papineau.

Unless you did have to step around a dead or wounded man there was no time to observe his appearance; for by noon there were as many dead and wounded in the P. P's' trench as there were men fit for action.

Those unhurt did not have to be steadied by their superiors. Knocked down by a concussion they sprang up with the promptness of disgust of one thrown off a horse or tripped by a wire. When told to move from one part of the trench to another where there was desperate need, a word was sufficient direc-

tion. They understood what was wanted of them, these veterans. They went. They seized every lull to drop the rifle for the spade and repair the breaches. When they were not shooting they were digging. The officers had only to keep reminding them not to expose themselves in the breaches. For in the thick of it — and the thicker the more so — they must try to keep some dirt between all of their bodies except the head and arm which must be up in order to fire.

At 1.30 a cheer rose from that trench. It was for a platoon of the King's Royal Rifles which had come as reinforcement. Oh, but that band of Tommies did look good to the P. P's! And the little prize package that the very reliable Mr. Atkins had with him — the machine gun! You can always count on Mr. Atkins to remain "among those present" to the last on such occasions.

Now Niven got word by messenger to go to the nearest point where the telephone was working and tell the brigade commander the complete details of the situation. The brigade commander asked him if he could stick, and he said "Yes, sir!" which is what Col. "Fanny" Farquhar would have said. That trip was hardly what could be called peaceful. The orderly whom Niven had with him both going and coming was hit by high explosive shells. Niven is so small — it is very difficult to hit him. He is about up to Major Gault's shoulder.

He had been worrying about his supply of rifle cartridges. There were not enough to take care of another German infantry charge which was surely coming. After repelling two charges, think of failing to repel the third for want of ammunition! Think of Corporal Christy, the bear-hunter, with the Germans

thick in front of him and no bullets for his rifle! But appeared again Mr. Thomas Atkins — another platoon of him with twenty boxes of cartridges which were rather a risky burden to bring through the shell fire. The relief as these were distributed was that of having something at your throat which threatens to strangle you removed.

Making another tour of his trenches about four in the afternoon, Niven found that there was a gap of fifty yards between his left and the right of the adjoining regiment. Fifty yards is the inch on the end of a man's nose in trench warfare on such an occasion. He was able to place eight men in that gap. At least, they could keep a lookout and tell him what was going on.

It was not cheering news either to learn a little later that the regiments on his left had withdrawn to trenches about three hundred yards to the rear — a long distance in trench warfare. But the P. P's had no time for retirement. They could have gone only in the panic of men who think of nothing in their demoralisation except to flee from the danger in front without thinking that there may be more danger to the rear. They were held where they were under what cover they had by the renewed blasts of shells — putting the machine guns out of action again — which suddenly ceased; for the Germans were coming on again.

Now was the supreme effort. It was as a nightmare in which only the objective of effort is recalled and all else is a vague struggle of all the strength one can exert against smothering odds. No use to ask these men what they thought. What do you think when you are climbing up a rope whose strands are

breaking over the edge of a precipice? You climb — that is all.

The P. P's shot at Germans. After a night without sleep, after a day among their dead and wounded, after the torrents of shell-fire, after breathing smoke, dust and gas, these veterans were in a state of exaltation entirely unconscious of dangers of their surroundings, mindless of what came next, automatically shooting to kill as they were trained to do, even as a man pulls with every ounce of strength he has in him in a close finish of a boat race.

Corporal Dover had to give up firing his machine gun at last. Wounded, he had dug it out of the earth after an explosion and set it up again. The explosion that destroyed the gun finally crushed his leg and arm. He crawled out of the *débris* towards the support trench which had become the fire trench, only to be killed by a bullet.

The Germans got possession of a section of the P. P's' trench where, it is believed, no Canadians were left. But the German effort died there. It could get no farther. This was as near to Ypres as the Germans were to go in this direction. When the day's work was done and there in sight of the field scattered with German dead, the P. P's counted their numbers. Of the 635 men who had begun the fight at daybreak one hundred and fifty men and four officers, Niven, Papineau, Clark and Vandenberg, remained fit for duty.

Papineau is a young lawyer of Montreal, who had already won the Military Cross for bombing Germans out of a sap at St. Eloi. Vandenberg is a Dutchman — but mostly he is Vandenberg. To him the call of youth is the call to arms. He knows the roads of

Europe and the roads of Chihuahua. He was at home fighting with Villa at Zacatecas and at home fighting with the P. P's in front of Ypres.

Darkness found all the survivors among the P. P's in the support and communication trenches. The fire trench had become an untenable dust-heap. They crept out only to bring in any wounded unable to help themselves; and wounded and rescuers were more than once hit in the process. It was too dangerous to attempt to bury the dead, who were in the fire trench. Most of them had already been buried by shells. For them and for the dead in the support trenches interred by their living comrades Niven recited such portions as he could recall of the Church of England service for the dead — recited them with a tight throat. Then, the P. P's, unbeaten, marched out, leaving the position to their relief, a battalion of the King's Royal Rifle Corps.

Eighteen hundred strong they had come out to France; and after they had repulsed German charges in the midst of shells that mauled their trenches at Hooge on that indescribable day of May 8th, one hundred and fifty were able to bear arms and little Lieutenant Niven, polo player and horseman, who had entered as a private, was in command. Corporal Christy, bear-hunter of the Northwest, who could "shoot the eyes off an ant," by some miracle had escaped without a scratch. All the praise that the P. P's, millionaire or labourer, scapegrace or respectable pillar of society, ask is that they were worthy of fighting side by side with Mr. Thomas Atkins, regular. At best one poor little finite mind only observes through a rift in the black smoke and yellow smoke of high explosives and the clouds of dust and military

secrecy something of what has happened in a small section of that long line from Switzerland to the North Sea many times; and this is given here.

Leaning against the wall in a corner of the dining-room of the French château were the P. P's' colours. Major Niven took off the wrapper in order that I might see the flag with the initials of the battalion which Princess Patricia embroidered with her own hands. There's room, one repeats, for a little sentiment and a little emotion, too, between Halifax and Vancouver.

"Of course we could not take our colours into action," said Niven. "They would have been torn into tatters or buried in a shell crater. But we've always kept them up at battalion headquarters. I believe we are the only battalion that has. We promised the Princess that we would."

In her honour an old custom has been renewed in France: knights are fighting in the name of a fair lady.

# XXVI

## FINDING THE BRITISH FLEET

The Briton's island instinct — Secrecy surrounding the fleet — The magic message — The journey — A night drive along the bleak coast of Scotland — Boy scouts as sentries — An obdurate guard — The navy yard — The Admiral's "quarter deck" — The largest contract in all England — Great dry docks — Patriots in workmen's clothes.

THE Briton's national self-consciousness is surrounded by salt water. His island instinct is only another word for sea instinct. Ebb and flow of war on the Continent, play of party politics at home, optimism and pessimism wrestling in the press — in the back of his head he was thinking of the navy.

During the first year of the war all other curtains of military secrecy were parted at intervals; but the world of British naval operations seemed hermetically sealed. One could only imagine what the Grand Fleet was like. He had despaired of ever seeing it in the life, when good fortune slipped a message across the Channel to the British front, which became the magic carpet of transition from the burrowing army in its trenches to the solid decks of battleships; which changed the war correspondent's modern steed, the automobile, trailing dust over French roads, to destroyers trailing foam in choppy seas off English coasts.

But not all the journeying was on destroyers. One must travel by car also if he would know something of the intricate, busy world of the Admiralty's work,

which makes coastguards a part of its personnel. There was more than ships to see; more than one place to go in that wonderful week.

The transition is less sudden if we begin with the career of an open car along the coast of Scotland in the night. Dusk had fallen on the purple cloud-lands of heather dotted with the white spots of grazing sheep in the Scotch highlands under changing skies, with headlands stretching out into the misty reaches of the North Sea, forbidding in the chill air after the warmth of France and suggestive of the uninviting theatre where, in approaching winter, patrols and trawlers and mine-sweepers carried on their work to within range of the guns of Heligoland. A people who lived in such a chill land, in sight of such a chill sea, and who spoke of their "bonnie Scotland forever," were worthy to be masters of that sea.

The Americans who think of Britain as a small island forget the distance from Land's End to John o' Groat's, which represents coast line to be guarded; and we may find a lesson, too, we who must make our real defence by sea, of tireless vigils which may be our own if the old Armageddon beast ever comes threatening the far-longer coast line that we have to defend. For you may never know what war is till war comes. Not even the Germans knew, though they had practised with a lifelike dummy behind the curtains for forty years.

At intervals, just as in the military zone in France, sentries stopped us and took the number of our car; but this time sentries, who were guarding a navy's rather than an army's secrets. With darkness we passed the light of an occasional inn, while cottage lights made a scattered sprinkling among the dim

masses of the hills. One wondered where all the kilted Highland soldiers whom he had seen at the front came from, without, I trust, disclosing any military secret that the canny Highlanders enlist Lowlanders in kilty regiments.

The Frenchmen of our party — M. Stephen Pichon, former Foreign Minister, M. Réné Bazin, of the Academie Française, M. Joseph Reinach, of the *Figaro,* M. Pierre Mille, of *Le Temps,* and M. Henri Ponsot — who had never been in Scotland before, were on the lookout for a civilian Scot in kilts and were grievously disappointed not to find a single one.

That night ride convinced me that however many Germans might be moving about in England under the guise of cockney or of Lancashire dialects in quest of information, none has any chance in Scotland. He could never get the burr, I am sure, unless born in Scotland; and if he were, once he had it the triumph ought to make him a Scotchman at heart.

The officer of the Royal Navy, who was in the car with me, confessed to less faith in his symbol of authority than in the generations'-bred burr of our chauffeur to carry conviction of our genuineness; so arguments were left to him and successfully, including two or three with Scotch cattle, which seemed to be co-operating with the sentries to block the road.

After an hour's run inland and the car rose over a ridge and descended on a sharp grade, in the distance under the moonlight we saw the floor of the sea again, melting into opaqueness, with curving fringes of foam along the irregular shore cut by the indentations of the firths. Now the sentries were more frequent and more particular. Our single light gave dim form to

the figures of sailors, soldiers, and boy scouts on patrol.

"They've done remarkably well, these boys!" said the officer. "Our fears that, boylike, they would see all kinds of things which didn't exist were quite needless. The work has taught them a sense of responsibility which will remain with them after the war, when their experience will be a precious memory. They realise that it isn't play, but a serious business, and act accordingly."

With all the houses and the countryside dark, the rays of our lamp seemed an invading comet to the men who held up lanterns with red twinkles of warning.

"The patrol boats have complained about your lights, sir!" said one obdurate sentry.

We looked out into the black wall in the direction of the sea and could see no sign of a patrol boat. How had it been able to inform this lone sentry of that flying ray which disclosed the line of a coastal road to any one at sea? He would not accept the best argumentative burr that our chauffeur might produce as sufficient explanation or guarantee. Most Scottish of Scots in physiognomy and shrewd matter-of-factness, as revealed in the glare of the lantern, he might have been on watch in the Highland fastnesses in Prince Charlie's time.

"Captain R——, of the Royal Navy!" explained the officer, introducing himself.

"I'll take your name and address!" said the sentry.

"The Admiralty. I take the responsibility."

"As I'll report, sir!" said the sentry, not so convinced but he burred something further into the chauffeur's ear.

This seems to have little to do with the navy, but it has much, indeed, as a part of an unfathomable, complicated business of guards within guards, intelligence battling with intelligence, deceiving raiders by land or sea, of those responsible for the safety of England and the mastery of the seas.

. . . . . .

It is from the navy yard that the ships go forth to battle and to the navy yard they must return for supplies and for the grooming beat of hammers in the dry dock. Those who work at a navy yard keep the navy's house; welcome home all the family, from Dreadnoughts to trawlers, give them cheer and shelter, and bind up their wounds.

The quarter-deck of action for Admiral Lowry, commanding the great base on the Forth, which was begun before the war and hastened to completion since, was a substantial brick office building. Adjoining his office, where he worked with engineers' blue prints as well as with sea maps, he had fitted up a small bedroom where he slept, to be at hand if any emergency arose.

Partly we walked, as he showed us over his domain of steam-shovels, machine shops, cement factories, of building and repairs, of coaling and docking, and partly we rode on a car that ran over temporary rails laid for trucks loaded with rocks and dirt. Borrowing from Peter to pay Paul, a river bottom had been filled in back of the quays with material that had been excavated to form a vast basin with cement walls, where squadrons of Dreadnoughts might rest and await their turn to be warped into the great dry docks which open off it in chasmlike galleries.

"The largest contract in all England," said the con-

tractor. "And here is the man who checks up my work," he added, nodding to the lean, Scotch naval civil engineer who was with us. It was clear from his look that only material of the best quality and work that was true would be acceptable to this canny mentor of efficiency.

"And the workers? Have you had any strikes here?"

"No. We have employed double the usual number of men from the start of the war," he said. "I'm afraid that the Welsh coal troubles have been accepted as characteristic. Our men have been reasonable and patriotic. They've shown the right spirit. If they hadn't, how could we have accomplished that?"

We were looking down into the depths of a dry dock blasted out of the rock, which had been begun and completed within the year. And we had heard nothing of all this through those twelve months! No writer, no photographer, chronicled this silent labour! Double lines of guards surrounded the place day and night. Only tried patriots might enter this world of a busy army in smudged workmen's clothes, bending to their tasks with that ordered discipline of industrialism which wears no uniforms, marches without beat of drums, and toils that the ships shall want nothing to ensure victory.

# XXVII

## ON A DESTROYER

Losing one's heart to the British navy — "Specialised in torpedo work" — Watching for submarines — Passing a flotilla — The eyes of the navy — Cold on the bridge — A jumpy sea — Look out for the spray — A symphony in mechanism — Around a bend and: the sea power of England!

Now we were on our way to the great thing — to our look behind the curtain at the hidden hosts of sea-power. Of some eight hundred tons' burden our steed, doing eighteen knots, which was a dog-trot for one of her speed.

"A destroyer is like an automobile," said the commander. "If you rush her all the time she wears out. We give her the limit only when necessary."

On the bridge the zest of travel on a dolphin of steel held the bridle on eagerness to reach the journey's end. We all like to see things well done and here one had his first taste of how well things are done in the British navy, which did not have to make ready for war after the war began. With an open eye one went, and the experience of other navies as a balance for his observation; but one lost one's heart to the British navy and might as well confess it now. A six months' cruise with our own battleship fleet was a proper introduction to the experience. Never under any flag not my own did I feel so much at home.

After the arduous monotony of the trenches and after the traffic of London, it was freedom and sport and ecstasy to be there, with the rush of salt air on

the face! Our commander was under thirty years of age; and that destroyer responded to his will like a stringed instrument. He seemed a part of her, her nerves welded to his.

"Specialised in torpedo work," he said, in answer to a question. That is the way of the British navy: to learn one thing well before you go on with another. If in the course of it you learn how to command, larger responsibilities await you. If not — there's retired pay.

Inside a shield which sheltered them from the spray on the forward deck, significantly free of everything but that four-inch gun, its crew was stationed. The commander had only to lean over and speak through a tube and give a range, and the music began. That tube bifurcated at the end to an ear-mask over a youngster's head; a youngster who had real sailor's smiling blue eyes, like the commander's own. For hours he would sit waiting in the hope that game would be sighted. No fisherman could be more patient or more cheerful.

"Before he came into the navy he was a chauffeur. He likes this," said the commander.

"In case of a submarine you do not want to lose any time; is that it?"

"Yes," he replied. "You never can tell when we might have a chance to put a shot into Fritz's periscope or ram him — Fritz is our name for submarines."

Were all the commanders of destroyers up to his mark, one wondered. How many more had the British navy caught young and trained to such quickness of decision and in the art of imparting it to his men?

Three hundred revolutions! The destroyer changed speed. Five hundred! She changed speed again.

Out of the mist in the distance flashed a white ribbon knot that seemed to be tied to a destroyer's bow and behind it another destroyer, and still others, lean, catlike, but running as if legless, with greased bodies sliding over the sea. We snapped out some message to them and they answered as passing birds on the wing before they swept out of sight behind a headland with uncanny ease of speed. How many destroyers had England running to and fro in the North Sea, keen for the chase and too quick at dodging and too fast to be in any danger of the under-water dagger thrust of the assassins whom they sought. We know the figures in the naval lists, but there cannot be too many. They are the eyes of the navy; they gather information and carry a sting in their torpedo tubes.

It was chilly there on the bridge, with the prospect too entrancing not to remain even if one froze. But here stepped in naval preparedness with thick, short coats of llama wool.

"Served out to all the men last winter, when we were in the thick of it patrolling," the commander explained. "You'll not get cold in that!"

"And yourself?" was suggested to the commander.

"Oh, it is not cold enough for that in September! We're hardened to it. You come from the land and feel the change of air; we are at sea all the time," he replied. He was without even an overcoat; and the ease with which he held his footing made land lubbers feel their awkwardness.

A jumpy, uncertain tidal sea was running. Yet our destroyer glided over the waves, cut through them,

played with them, and let them seem to play with her, all the while laughing at them with the power of the purring vitals that drove her steadily on.

"Look out!" which at the front in France was a signal to jump for a "funk pit." We ducked, as a cloud of spray passed above the heavy canvas and clattered like hail against the smokestack. "There won't be any more!" said the commander. He was right. He knew that passage. One wondered if he did not know every gallon of water in the North Sea, which he had experienced in all its moods.

Sheltered by the smokestack down on the main deck, one of our party, who loved not the sea for its own sake but endured it as a passageway to the sight of the Grand Fleet, had found warmth, if not comfort. Not for him that invitation to come below given by the chief engineer, who rose out of a round hole with a pleasant, "How d'y do!" air to get a sniff of the fresh breeze, wizard of the mysterious power of the turbines which sent the destroyer marching so noiselessly. He was the one who transferred the captain's orders into that symphony in mechanism. Turn a lever and you had a dozen more knots; not with a leap or a jerk, but like a cat's sleek stretching of muscles. Not by the slightest tremor did you realise the acceleration; only by watching some stationary object as you flew past.

Now a sweep of smooth water at the entrance to a harbour, and a turn — and there it was: the sea power of England!

# XXVIII

## SHIPS THAT HAVE FOUGHT

The "invisible" fleet — No chance for German submarines — No end to the greyish blue-green monsters — the *Queen Elizabeth* — Sea-power and world power — Ships that have been under fire — A German "mistake" — Sir David Beatty — "Youth for action" — On board the *Lion* — Sensations during the fighting — Importance of accurate marksmanship — Crashing blasts and the scream of shells — Watching the hits — The precious turret — Result of German gunfire — A city of steel — Its brain-center — A panoply of tubes, levers, push-buttons — Methods of British gunfire — One of the great guns — Its human complement — The gun-pointer — From the upper bridge — An impressive beauty — The chase off Heligoland — Safe return of the *Lion*.

BUT was that really it? That spread of greyish blue-green dots set on a huge greyish blue-green platter? One could not discern where ships began and water and sky which held them suspended left off. Invisible fleet it had been called. At first glance it seemed to be composed of baffling phantoms, absorbing the tone of its background. Admiralty secrecy must be the result of a naval dislike of publicity.

Still as if they were rooted, these leviathans! How could such a shy, peaceful looking array send out broadsides of twelve- and thirteen-five and fifteen-inch shells? What a paradise for a German submarine! Each ship seemed an inviting target. Only there were many gates and doors to the paradise, closed to all things that travel on and under the water without a proper identification. Submarines that had tried to pick one of the locks were like the fish who found

going good into the trap. A submarine had about the same chance of reaching that anchorage as a German in the uniform of the Kaiser's Death's Head Hussars, with a bomb under his arm, of reaching the vaults of the Bank of England.

And was this all of the greatest naval force ever gathered under a single command, these two or three lines of ships? But as the destroyer drew nearer the question changed. How many more? Was there no end to greyish blue-green monsters, in order as precise as the trees of a California orchard, appearing out of the greyish blue-green background? First to claim attention was the *Queen Elizabeth,* with her eight fifteen-inch guns on a platform which could travel at nearly the speed of the average railroad train.

The contrast of sea and land warfare appealed the more vividly to one fresh from the front in France. What infinite labour for an army to get one big gun into position! How heralded the snail-like travels of the big German howitzer! Here was ship after ship, whose guns seemed innumerable. One found it hard to realise the resisting power of their armour, painted to look as liquid as the sea, and the stability of their construction, which was able to bear the strain of firing the great shells that travelled ten miles to their target.

Sea-power, indeed! And world power, too, there in the hollow of a nation's hand, to throw in whatever direction she pleased. If an American had a lump in his throat at the thought of what it meant, what might it not mean to an Englishman? Probably the Englishman would say, "I think that the fleet is all right, don't you?"

Land-power, too! On the Continent vast armies

wrestled for some square miles of earth. France has, say, three million soldiers; Germany, five; Austria, four — and England had, perhaps, a hundred thousand men, perhaps more, on board this fleet which defended the English land and lands far over seas without firing a shot. One American regiment of infantry is more than sufficient in numbers to man a Dreadnought. How precious, then, the skill of that crew! Man-power is as concentrated as gun-power with a navy. Ride three hundred miles in an automobile along an army front, with glimpses of units of soldiers, and you have seen little of a modern army. Here, moving down the lanes that separated these grey fighters, one could compass the whole!

Four gold letters, spelling the word Lion, awakened the imagination to the concrete of the *Blücher* turning her bottom skyward before she sank off the Dogger Bank under the fire of the guns of the *Lion* and of the *Tiger,* astern of her, and the *Princess Royal* and the *New Zealand,* of the latest fashion in battle-cruiser squadrons which are known as the "cat" squadron. This work brought them into their own; proved how the British, who built the first Dreadnought, have kept a little ahead of their rivals in construction. With almost the gun-power of Dreadnoughts, better than three to two against the best battleships, with the speed of cruisers and capable of overwhelming cruisers, or of pursuing any battleship, or getting out of range, they can run or strike, as they please.

Ascend that gangway, so amazingly clean, as were the decks above and below and everything about the *Lion* or the *Tiger,* and you were on board one of the few major ships which had been under heavy fire.

Her officers and men knew what modern naval war was like; her guns knew the difference between the wall of cloth of a towed target and an enemy's wall of armour.

In the battle of Tsushima Straits battleships had fought at three and four thousand yards and closed into much shorter range. Since then, we had had the new method of marksmanship. Tsushima ceased to be a criterion. The Dogger Bank multiplied the range by five. A hundred years since England, all the while the most powerfully armed nation at sea, had been in a naval war of the first magnitude; and to the *Lion* and the *Tiger* had come the test. The Germans said that they had sunk the *Tiger;* but the *Tiger* afloat purred a contented denial.

One could not fail to identify among the group of officers on the quarter-deck Vice-Admiral Sir David Beatty, for his victory had impressed his features on the public's eye. Had his portrait not appeared in the press, one would have been inclined to say that a first lieutenant had put on a vice-admiral's coat by mistake. He was about the age of the first lieutenant of our own battleships. Even as it was, one was inclined to exclaim: "There is some mistake! You are too young!" The Who is Who book says that he is all of forty-four years old and it must be right, though it disagrees with his appearance by five years. A vice-admiral at forty-four! A man who is a rear-admiral with us at fifty-five is very precocious. And all the men around him were young. The British navy did not wait for war to teach again the lesson of "youth for action!" It saved time by putting youth in charge at once.

Their simple uniforms, the directness, alertness, and

definiteness of these officers, who had been with a fleet ready for a year to go into battle on a minute's notice, was in keeping with their surroundings of decks cleared for action and the absence of anything which did not suggest that hitting a target was the business of their life.

"I had heard that you took your admirals from the school-room," said one of the Frenchmen, "but I begin to believe that it is the nursery."

Night and day they must be on watch. No easy-chairs; their shop is their home. They must have the vitality that endures a strain. One error in battle by any one of them might wreck the British Empire.

It is difficult to write about any man-of-war and not be technical; for everything about her seems technical and mechanical except the fact that she floats. Her officers and crew are engaged in work which is legerdermain to the civilian.

"Was it like what you thought it would be after all your training for a naval action?" one asked.

"Yes, quite; pretty much as we reasoned it out," was the reply. "Indeed, this was the most remarkable thing. It was battle practice — with the other fellow shooting at you!"

The fire-control officers, who were aloft, all agreed about one unexpected sensation, which had not occurred to any expert scientifically predicating what action would be like. They are the only ones who may really "see" the battle in the full sense.

"When the shells burst against the armour," said one of these officers, "the fragments were visible as they flew about. We had a desire, in the midst of our preoccupation with our work, to reach out and

catch them. Singular mental phenomenon, wasn't it?"

At eight or nine thousand yards one knew that the modern battleship could tear a target to pieces. But eighteen thousand — was accuracy possible at that distance?

"Did one in five German shells hit at that range?" I asked.

"No!"

Or in ten? No! In twenty? Still no, though less decisively. One got a conviction, then, that the day of holding your fire until you were close in enough for a large percentage of hits was past. Accuracy was still vital and decisive, but generic accuracy. At eighteen thousand yards all the factors which send a thousand or fifteen hundred or two thousand pounds of steel that long distance cannot be so gauged that each one will strike in exactly the same line when ten issue from the gun-muzzles in a broadside. But if one out of twenty is on at eighteen thousand yards, it may mean a turret out of action. Again, four or five might hit, or none. So, no risk of waiting may be taken, in face of the danger of a chance shot at long range. It was a chance shot which struck the *Lion's* feed tank and disabled her and kept the cat squadron from doing to the other German cruisers what they had done to the *Blücher*.

"And the noise of it to you aloft, spotting the shots?" I suggested. "It must have been a lonely place in such a tornado."

"Yes. Besides the crashing blasts from our own guns we had the screams of the shells that went over and the cataracts of water from those short sprinkling the ship with spray. But this was what one expected.

Everything was what one expected, except that desire to catch the fragments. Naturally, one was too busy to think much of anything except the enemy's ships — to learn where your shells were striking."

"You could tell?"

"Yes, just as well and better than at target practice for the target was larger and solid. It was enthralling, that watching the flight of our shells toward their target."

Where were the scars from the wounds? One looked for them on both the *Lion* and the *Tiger*. That armour patch on the sloping top of a turret might have escaped attention if it had not been pointed out. A shell struck there and a fair blow, too. And what happened inside? Was the turret gear put out of order?

To one who has lived in a wardroom a score of questions were on the tongue's end. The turret is the basket which holds the precious eggs. A turret out of action means two guns out of action; a broken knuckle for the pugilist.

Constructors have racked their brains over the subject of turrets in the old contest between gun-power and protection. Too much gun-power, too little armour! Too much armour, too little gun-power! Off the Virginia capes we have pounded antiquated battleships with shells as a test, with sheep inside the turrets to see if life could survive. But in the last analysis results depend on how good is your armour, how sound your machinery which rotates the turret. That shell did not go through bodily, only a fragment, which killed one man and wounded another. The turret would still rotate; the other gun remained in action and the one under the shell-burst was soon

back in action. Very satisfactory to the naval constructors.

Up and down the all-but perpendicular steel ladders with their narrow steps, and through the winding passages below decks in those cities of steel, one followed his guide, receiving so much information and so many impressions that he was confused as to details between the two veterans, the *Lion,* which was hit fifteen times, and the *Tiger,* which was hit eight. Wherever you went every square inch of space and every bit of equipment seemed to serve some purpose.

A beautiful hit, indeed, was that into a small hooded aperture where an observer looked out from a turret. He was killed and another man took his place. Fresh armour and no sign of where the shot had struck. Then below, into a compartment between the side of the ship and the armoured barbette which protects the delicate machinery for feeding shells and powder from the magazine deep below the water to the guns.

"H—— was killed here. Impact of the shell passing through the outer plates burst it inside; and, of course, the fragments struck harmlessly against the barbette."

"Bang in the dugout!" one exclaimed, from army habit.

"Precisely! No harm done next door."

Trench traverses and "funk-pit shelters" for localising the effects of shell-bursts are the terrestrial expression of marine construction. No one shell happened to get many men either on the *Lion* or the *Tiger.* But the effect of the burst was felt in the passages, for the air-pressure is bound to be pronounced in enclosed spaces which allow of little room for the expansion of the gases.

Then up more ladders out of the electric light into the daylight, hugging a wall of armour whose thickness was revealed in the cut made for the small doorway which you were bidden to enter. Now you were in one of the brain-centres of the ship, where the action is directed. Through slits in that massive shelter of the hardest steel one had a narrow view. Above them on the white wall were silhouetted diagrams of the different types of German ships, which one found in all observing stations. They were the most popular form of mural decoration in the British navy.

Underneath the slits was a literal panoply of the brass fittings of speaking-tubes and levers and push-buttons, which would have puzzled even the "Hello, Central" girl. To look at them revealed nothing more than the eye saw; nothing more than the face of a watch reveals of the character of its works. There was no telling how they ran in duplicate below the water line or under the protection of armour to the guns and the engines.

"We got one in here, too. It was a good one!" said the host.

"Junk, of course," was how he expressed the result. Here, too, a man stepped forward to take the place of the man who was killed, just as the first lieutenant takes the place of a captain of infantry who falls. With the whole telephone apparatus blown off the wall, as it were, how did he communicate?

"There!" The host pointed toward an opening at his feet. If that failed there was still another way. In the final alternative, each turret could go on firing by itself. So the Germans must have done on the *Blücher* and on the *Gneisenau* and the *Scharnhorst* in their last ghastly moments of bloody chaos.

" If this is carried away and then that is, why, then, we have —" as one had often heard officers say on board our own ships. But that was hypothesis. Here was demonstration, which made a glimpse of the *Lion* and the *Tiger* so interesting. The *Lion* had had a narrow escape from going down after being hit in the feed tank; but once in dry dock, all her damaged parts had been renewed. Particularly it required imagination to realise that this tower had ever been struck; visually, more convincing was a plate elsewhere which had been left unpainted, showing a spatter of dents from shell-fragments.

" We thought that we ought to have something to prove that we had been in battle," said the host. " I think I've shown all the hits. There were not many."

Having seen the results of German gun-fire, we were next to see the methods of British gun-fire; something of the guns and the men who did things to the Germans. One stooped under the overhang of the turret armour from the barbette and climbed up through an opening which allowed no spare room for the generously built, and out of the dim light appeared the glint of the massive steel breech block and gun, set in its heavy recoil mountings with roots of steel supports sunk into the very structure of the ship. It was like other guns of the latest improved type; but it had been in action, and one kept thinking of this fact that gave it a sort of majestic prestige. One wished that it might look a little different from the others, as the right of a veteran.

As the plugman swung the breech open I had in mind a giant plugman on the U. S. S. *Connecticut* whom I used to watch at drills and target practice. Shall I ever forget the flash in his eye if there were a

fraction of a second's delay in the firing after the breech had gone home! The way in which he made that enormous block obey his touch in oily obsequiousness suggested the apotheosis of the whole business of naval war. I don't know whether the plugman of H. M. S. *Lion* or the plugman of the U. S. S. *Connecticut* was the better. It would take a superman to improve on either.

Like the block, it seemed as if the man knew only the movements of the drill; as if he had been bred and his muscles formed for that. One could conceive of him playing diavolo with that breech. He belonged to the finest part of all the machinery, the human element, which made the parts of a steel machine play together in a beautiful harmony.

The plugman's is the most showy part; others playing equally important parts are in the cavern below the turret; and most important of all is that of the man who keeps the gun on the target, whose true right eye may send twenty-five thousand tons of battleship to perdition. No one eye of any enlisted man can be as important as the gun-pointer's. His the eye and the nerve trained as finely as the plugman's muscles. He does nothing else, thinks of nothing else. In common with painters and poets, gun-pointers are born with a gift, and that gift is trained and trained and trained. It seems simple to keep right on, but it is not. Try twenty men in the most rudimentary test and you will find that it is not; then think of the nerve it takes to keep right on in battle, with your ship shaken by the enemy's hits.

How long had the plugman been on his job? Six years. And the gun-pointer? Seven. Twelve years is the term of enlistment in the British navy. Not too

fast but thoroughly, is the British way. The idea is to make a plugman or a gun-pointer the same kind of expert as a master artisan in any other walk of life, by long service and selection.

None of all these men serving the two guns from the depths to the turret saw anything of the battle, except the gun-pointer. It was easier for them than for him to be letter-perfect in the test, as he had to guard against the exhilaration of having an enemy's ship instead of a cloth target under his eye. Super-drilled he was to that eventuality; super-drilled all the others through the years, till each one knew his part as well as one knows how to turn the key in the lock of his bureau. Used to the shock of the discharges of their own guns at battle practice, many of the crew did not even know that their ship was hit, so preoccupied was each with his own duty, which was to go on with it until an order or a shell's havoc stopped him. Every mind was closed except to the thing which had been so established by drill in his nature that he did it instinctively.

A few minutes later one was looking down from the upper bridge on the top of this turret and the black-lined planking of the deck eighty-five feet below, with the sweep of the firm lines of the sides converging toward the bow on the background of the water. Suddenly the ship seemed to have grown large, impressive; her structure had a rocklike solidity. Her beauty was in her unadorned strength. One was absorbing the majesty of a city from a cathedral tower after having been in its thoroughfares and seen the detail of its throbbing industry.

Beyond the *Lion's* bow were more ships, and port and starboard and aft were still more ships. The

compass range filled the eye with the stately precision of the many squadrons and divisions of leviathans. One could see all the fleet. This seemed to be the scenic climax; but it was not, as we were to learn when we should see the fleet go to sea. Then we were to behold the mountains on the march.

One glanced back at the deck and around the bridge with a sort of relief. The infinite was making him dizzy. He wanted to be in touch with the finite again. But it is the writer, not the practical, hardened seaman, who is affected in this way. To the seaman, here was a battle-cruiser with her sister battle-cruisers astern, and there around her were Dreadnoughts of different types and pre-Dreadnoughts and cruisers and all manner of other craft which could fight each in its way, each representing so much speed and so much metal which could be thrown a certain distance.

"Homogeneity!" Another favourite word, I remember, from our own wardrooms. Here it was applied in the large. No experimental ships there, no freak variations of type, but each successive type as a unit of action. Homogeneous, yes — remorselessly homogeneous. The British do not simply build some ships; they build a navy. And of course the experts are not satisfied with it; if they were, the British navy would be in a bad way. But a layman was; he was overwhelmed.

From this bridge of the *Lion* on the morning of the 24th of January, 1914, Vice-Admiral Sir David Beatty saw appear on the horizon a sight inexpressibly welcome to any commander who has scoured the seas in the hope that the enemy will come out in the open and give battle. Once that German battle-cruiser squadron had slipped across the North Sea and, under

cover of the mist which has ever been the friend of the pirate, bombarded the women and children of Scarborough and the Hartlepools with shells meant to be fired at hardened adult males sheltered behind armour; and then, thanks to the mist, they had slipped back to Heligoland with cheering news to the women and children of Germany. This time when they came out they encountered a British battle-cruiser squadron of superior speed and power, and they had to fight as they ran for home.

Now, the place of an admiral is in his conning tower after he has made his deployments and the firing has begun. He, too, is a part of the machine; his position defined, no less than the plugman's and the gun-pointer's. Sir David watched the ranging shots which fell short at first, until finally they were on, and the Germans were beginning to reply. When his staff warned him that he ought to go below, he put them off with a preoccupied shake of his head. He could not resist the temptation to remain where he was, instead of being shut up looking through the slits of a visor.

But an admiral is as vulnerable to shell-fragments as a midshipman, and the staff did its duty, which had been thought out beforehand like everything else. The argument was on their side; the commander really had none on his. It was then that Vice-Admiral Beatty sent Sir David Beatty to the conning tower, much to the personal disgust of Sir David, who envied the observing officers aloft their free sweep of vision.

Youth in Sir David's case meant suppleness of limbs as well as youth's spirit and dash. When the *Lion* was disabled by the shot in her feed tank and had to fall out of line, Sir David must transfer his flag. He

signalled for his destroyer, the *Attack*. When she came alongside, he did not wait on a ladder, but jumped on board her from the deck of the *Lion*. An aged vice-admiral with chalky bones might have broken some of them, or at least received a shock to his presence of mind.

Before he left the *Lion* Sir David had been the first to see the periscope of a German submarine in the distance, which sighted the wounded ship as inviting prey. Officers of the *Lion* dwelt more on the cruise home than on the battle. It was a case of being towed at five knots an hour by the Indomitable. If ever submarines had a fair chance to show what they could do it was then against that battleship at a snail's pace. But it is one thing to torpedo a merchant craft and another to get a major fighting ship, bristling with torpedo defence guns and surrounded by destroyers. The *Lion* reached port without further injury.

# XXIX

## ON THE "INFLEXIBLE"

Veterans of the Dardanelles — "The range of them" — The Falkland affair — The "double bluff" on von Spee — The intercepted British wireless — Sturdee's trap — Story book of strategy — The Germans go down with their colours flying — Only a disordered wardroom — The chaplain's anecdote — All a lark for the midshipman — Souvenirs of action.

WHAT Englishman, let alone an American, knows the names of even all the British Dreadnoughts? With a few exceptions, the units of the Grand Fleet seem anonymous. The *Warspite* was quite unknown to the fame which her sister ship the *Queen Elizabeth* had won. For *"Lizzie"* was back in the fold from the Dardanelles; and so was the *Inflexible,* flagship of the battle of the Falkland Islands. Of all the ships which Sir John Jellicoe had sent away on special missions, the *Inflexible* had had the grandest Odyssey. She, too, had been at the Dardanelles.

The *Queen Elizabeth* was disappointing so far as wounds went. She had been so much in the public eye that one expected to find her badly battered, and she had suffered little, indeed, for the amount of sport sh had had in tossing her fifteen-inch shells across the Gallipoli peninsula into the Turkish batteries and the amount of risk she had run from Turkish mines. Some of these monster shells contained only eleven thousand shrapnel bullets. A strange business for a fifteen-inch naval gun to be firing shrapnel. A year ago no one could have imagined that one day the

most powerful British ship, built with the single thought of overwhelming an enemy's Dreadnought, would ever be trying to force the Dardanelles.

The trouble was that she could not fire an army corps ashore along with her shells to take possession of any batteries she put out of action. She had some grand target practice; she escaped the mines; she kept out of reach of the German shells, and returned to report to Sir John with just enough scars to give zest to the recollection of her extraordinary adventure. All the fleet was relieved to see her back in her proper place. It is not the business of super-Dreadnoughts to be steaming around mine-fields, but to be surrounded by destroyers and light cruisers and submarines safeguarding her giant guns which are depressed and elevated as easily as if they were drum-sticks. One had an abrasion, a tracery of dents.

"That was from a Turkish shell," said an officer. "And you are standing where a shell hit."

One looked down to see an irregular outline of fresh planking.

"An accident when we did not happen to be out of their reach. We had the range of them," he added.

"The range of them" is a great phrase. Sir Frederick Doveton Sturdee used it in speaking of the battle of the Falkland Islands. "The range of them" seems a sure prescription for victory. Nothing in all the history of the war appeals to me as quite so smooth a bit of tactics as the Falkland affair. It was so smooth that it was velvety; and it is worth telling again, as I understand it. Sir Frederick is another young admiral. Otherwise, how could the British navy have entrusted him with so important a task? He is a different type from Beatty, who in an

army one judges might have been in the cavalry. Along with the peculiar charm and alertness which we associate with sailors — they imbibe it from the salt air and from meeting all kinds of weather and all kinds of men, I think — he has the quality of the scholar, with a suspicion of merriness in his eye.

He was Chief of Staff at the Admiralty in the early stages of the war, which means, I take it, that he assisted in planning the moves on the chessboard. It fell to him to act; to apply the strategy and tactics which he planned for others at sea while he sat at a desk. It was his wit against von Spee's, who was not deficient in this respect. If he had been he might not have steamed into the trap. The trouble was that von Spee had some wit, but not enough. It would have been better for him if he had been as guileless as a parson.

Sir Frederick is so gentle-mannered that one would never suspect him of a "double bluff," which was what he played on von Spee. After von Spee's victory over Cradock, Sturdee slipped across to the South Atlantic, without any one knowing that he had gone, with a squadron strong enough to do unto von Spee what von Spee had done unto Cradock.

But before you wing your bird you must flush him. The thing was to find von Spee and force him to give battle; for the South Atlantic is broad and von Spee, it is supposed, was in an Emden mood and bent on reaching harbour in German Southwest Africa, whence he could sally out to destroy British shipping on the Cape route. When he intercepted a British wireless message — Sturdee had left off the sender's name and location — telling the plodding old *Canopus* seeking home or assistance before von Spee overtook

her, that she would be perfectly safe in the harbour at Port William, as guns had been erected for her protection, von Spee guessed that this was a bluff, and rightly. But it was only Bluff Number One. He steamed to the Falklands with a view to finishing off the old *Canopus* on the way across to Africa. There he fell foul of Bluff Number Two. Sturdee did not have to seek him; he came to Sturdee.

There was no convenient Dogger Bank fog in that latitude to cover his flight. Sturdee had the speed of von Spee and he had to fight. It was the one bit of strategy of the war which is like that of the story books and worked out as the strategy always does in proper story books. Practically the twelve-inch guns of the *Inflexible* and the *Invincible* had only to keep their distance and hang on to the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau* in order to do the trick. Light-weights or middle-weights have no business trafficking with heavy-weights in naval warfare.

"Von Spee made a brave fight," said Sir Frederick, "but we kept him at a distance that suited us, without letting him get out of range."

He had had the fortune to prove an established principle in action. It was all in the course of duty, which is the way that all the officers and all the men look at their work. Only a few ships have had a chance to fight and these are emblazoned on the public memory. But they did no better and no worse, probably, than the others would have done. If the public singles out ships, the navy does not. Whatever is done and whoever does it, why, it is to the credit of the family, according to the spirit of service that promotes uniformity of efficiency. Leaders and ships which have won renown are resolved into the whole in that

harbour where the fleet is the thing; and the good opinion they most desire is that of their fellows. If they have that, they will earn the public's when the test comes.

Belonging to the class of the first of battle-cruisers is the *Inflexible,* which received a few taps in the Falklands and a blow that was nearly the death of her in the Dardanelles. Tribute enough for its courage — the tribute of a chivalrous enemy — von Spee's squadron receives from the officers and men of the *Inflexible,* who saw them go down into the sea tinged with sunset red with their colours still flying. Then in the sunset red the British saved as many of those afloat as they could.

Those dripping German officers who had seen one of their battered turrets carried away bodily into the sea by a British twelve-inch shell, who had endured a fury of concussions and destruction, with steel missiles cracking steel structures into fragments, came on board the *Inflexible* looking for signs of some blows delivered in return for the crushing blows that had beaten their ships into the sea and saw none until they were invited into the wardroom, which was in chaos — and then they smiled.

At least, they had sent one shell home. The sight was sweet to them, so sweet that, in respect to the feeling of the vanquished, the victor held silence with a knightly consideration. But where had the shell entered? There was no sign of any hole. Then they learned that the fire of the guns of the starboard turret midships over the wardroom, which was on the port side, had deposited a great many things on the floor which did not belong there; and their expression changed. Even this comfort was taken from them.

"We had the range of you!" the British explained.

The chaplain of the *Inflexible* was bound to have an anecdote. I don't know why, except that a chaplain's is not a fighting part and he may look on. His place was down behind the armour with the doctor, waiting for wounded. He stood in his particular steel cave listening to the tremendous blasts of her guns which shook the *Inflexible's* frame, and still no wounded arrived. Then he ran up a ladder to the deck and had a look around and saw the little points of the German ships with the shells sweeping toward them and the smoke of explosions which burst on board them. It was not the British who needed his prayers that day, but the Germans.

Perhaps the spirit of the *Inflexible's* story was best given by a midshipman with the down still on his cheek. Considering how young the British take their officer-beginners to sea, the admirals are not young, at least, in point of sea service. He got more out of the action than his elders; his impressions of the long cruises and the actions had the vividness of boyhood. Down in one of the caves, doing his part as the shells were sent up to feed the thundering guns above, the whispered news of the progress of the battle was passed on at intervals till, finally, the guns were silent. Then he hurried on deck in the elation of victory, succeeded by the desire to save those whom they had fought. It had all been so simple; so like drill. You had only to go on shooting — that was all.

Yes, he had been lucky. From the Falklands to the Dardanelles, which was a more picturesque business than the battle. Any minute off the Straits you did not know but a submarine would have a try at you or you might bump into a mine. And the *Inflexible*

did bump into one. She had two thousand tons of water on board. It was fast work to keep the remainder of the sea from coming in, too, and the same kind of dramatic experience as the *Lion's* in reaching port. Yes, he had been very lucky. It was all a lark to that boy.

"It never occurs to midshipmen to be afraid of anything," said one of the officers. "The more danger, the better they like it."

In the wardroom was a piece of the mine or the torpedo, whichever it was, that struck the *Inflexible;* a strange, twisted, annealed bit of metal. Every ship which had been in action had some souvenir which the enemy had sent on board in anger and which was preserved with a collector's enthusiasm.

The *Inflexible* seemed as good as ever she was. Such is the way of naval warfare. Either it is to the bottom of the sea or to dry docks and repairs. There is nothing half way. So it is well to take care that you have "the range of them."

# XXX

## ON THE FLEET FLAGSHIP

The "grande dames" of the fleet — The boarding — Nelson's heritage — Guardians of the peace of the seas — Sir John Jellicoe — The China seas incident — The compliment returned at Manila Bay — Friends in the service — That command of Joshua's — Waiting and watching — England's true genius — A complete blockade — Intricate and concentrated mechanism — Personality of Sir John — The spirit of service.

THUS far we have skirted around the heart of things, which in a fleet is always the commander-in-chief's flagship. Our handy, agile destroyer ran alongside a battleship with as much nonchalance as she would go alongside a pier. I should not have been surprised to have seen her pirouette over the hills or take to flight.

There was a time when those majestic and pampered ladies, the battleships — particularly if a sea were running as there was in this harbour at the time — having in mind the pride of paint, begged all destroyers to keep off with the superciliousness of *grandes dames* holding their skirts aloof from contact with nimble, audacious street gamins, who dodged in and out of the traffic of muddy streets. But destroyers have learned better manners, perhaps, and battleships have been democratised. It is the day of Russian dancers and when aeroplanes loop the loop, and we have grown used to all kinds of marvels.

But the sea has refused to be trained. It is the same old sea that it was in Columbus' time, without

any loss of trickiness in bumping small craft against towering sides. The way that this destroyer slid up to the flagship without any fuss and the way her bluejackets held off from the paint as she rose on the crests and slipped back into the trough, did not tell the whole story. A part of it was how, at the right interval, they assisted the landlubber to step from gunwale to gangway, making him feel perfectly safe when he would have been perfectly helpless but for them.

I had often watched our own bluejackets at the same thing. They did not grin — not when you were looking at them. Nor did the British. Bluejackets are noted for their official politeness. I should like to have heard their remarks — they have a gift for remarks — about those invaders of their uniformed world in Scotch caps and other kinds of caps and the different kind of clothes which tailors make for civilians. Without any intention of eavesdropping, I did overhear one asking another whence came these strange birds.

One knew the flagship by the admirals' barges astern, as you know the location of an army headquarters by its automobiles. It seemed in the centre of the fleet at anchor, if that is a nautical expression. Where its place would be in action is one of those secrets as important to the enemy as the location of a general's shell-proof shelter in Flanders. Perhaps Sir John Jellicoe may be on some other ship in battle. If there is any one foolish question which one should not ask it is this.

As one mounted the gangway of this mighty super-Dreadnought one was bound to think of another flagship in Portsmouth harbour, Nelson's *Victory* — at least, an American was. Probably an Englishman

would not indulge in such a commonplace. One would like to know how many Englishmen had ever seen the old *Victory*. But, then, how many Americans have been to Mount Vernon and Gettysburg?

It was a hundred years, one repeats, since the British had fought a first-class naval war. Nelson did his part so well that he did not leave any fighting to be done by his successors. Maintaining herself as mistress of the seas by the threat of superior strength — except in the late fifties, when the French innovation of iron ships gave France a temporary lead on paper — ship after ship, through all the grades of progress in naval construction, has gone to the scrap heap without firing a shot in anger.

The *Victory* was one landmark, or seamark, if you please, and this flagship was another. Between the two were generations of officers and men working through the change from stagecoach to motors and aeroplanes and seaplanes, who had kept up to a standard of efficiency in view of a test that never came. A year of war and still the test had not come, for the old reason that England had superior strength. Her outnumbering guns which had kept the peace of the seas still kept it.

All second nature to the Englishman this, as the defence of the immense distances of the steppes to the Russian or the Rocky Mountain wall and the Mississippi's flow to the man in Kansas. But the American kept thinking about it; and he wanted the Kansans to think about it, too. A sentimentalist envisaged the tall column in Trafalgar Square, with the one-armed figure turned toward the wireless skein on top of the Admiralty Building when he went on board the flagship of Sir John Jellicoe.

One first heard of Jellicoe fifteen years ago on the China coast, when he was Chief of Staff to Sir Edward Seymour, then Commander-in-Chief of the Asiatic Squadron. Indeed, one was always hearing about Jellicoe. He was the kind of man whom people talk about after they have met him, which means personality. It was in China seas, you may remember, that when a few British seamen were hard pressed in a fight that was not ours that the phrase, "Blood is thicker than water," sprang from the lips of an American commander, who waited not on international etiquette but went to the assistance of the British.

Nor will any one who was present in the summer of '98 forget how Sir Edward Chichester stood loyally by Admiral George Dewey, when the German squadron was empire-fishing in the waters of Manila Bay, until our Atlantic Fleet had won the battle of Santiago and Admiral Dewey had received reinforcements and, east and west, we were able to look after the Germans. The British bluejackets said that the rations of frozen mutton from Australia which we sent alongside were excellent; but the Germans were in no position to judge, as none was sent to them, doubtless through an oversight in the detail of hospitality by one of Admiral Dewey's staff. No. Let us be officially correct. We happened to run out of spare mutton after serving the British.

In the gallant effort of the Allied force of sailors to relieve the legations against some hundreds of thousands of Boxers, Captain Bowman McCalla and his Americans worked with Admiral Seymour and his Britons in the most trying and picturesque thing of its kind in modern history. McCalla, too, was always talking of Jellicoe, who was wounded on the expedi-

tion; and Sir John's face lighted at mention of McCalla's name. He recalled how McCalla had painted on the superstructure of the little *Newark* that saying of Farragut's, "The best protection against an enemy's fire is a well-directed fire of your own"; which has been said in other ways and cannot be said too often.

"We called McCalla Mr. Lead," said Sir John; "he had been wounded so many times and yet was able to hobble along and keep on fighting. I corresponded regularly with him until his death."

Beatty, too, was on that expedition; and he, too, was another personality one kept hearing about. It seemed odd that two men, who had played a part in work which was a soldier's far from home, should have become so conspicuous in the Great War. If on that day when, with ammunition exhausted, all members of the expedition had given up hope of ever returning alive, they had not accidentally come upon the Shi-kou arsenal, one would not be commanding the Great Fleet and the other its battle-cruiser squadron.

Before the war, I am told, when Admiralty lords and others who had the decision to make were discussing who should command in case of war, opinion ran something like this:

"Jellicoe! He has the brains!"

"Jellicoe! He has the health to endure the strain, with years enough and not too many!"

"Jellicoe! He has the confidence of the service!"

The choice literally made itself. When any one is undertaking the gravest responsibility which has been an Englishman's for a hundred years, that kind of a recommendation helps. He had the guns; he had

supreme command; he must deliver victory — such was England's message to him.

When I mentioned in a despatch that all that differentiated him from the officers around him was the broader band of gold lace on his arm, an English naval critic wanted to know if I expected to find him in cloth of gold. No; nor in full dress with all his medals on, as I saw him appear on the screen at a theatre in London.

Any general of high command must be surrounded by more pomp than an admiral in time of action. A headquarters cannot have the simplicity of the quarter-deck. The force which the general commands is not in sight; the admiral's is. You saw the commander and you saw what it was that he commanded. Within the sweep of vision from the quarter-deck was the terrific power which the man with the broad gold band on his arm directed. At a signal from him it would move or it would stand still. That command of Joshua's if given by Sir John one thought might have been obeyed.

One hundred, two hundred, three hundred, four hundred twelve-inch guns and larger, which could carry a hundred tons and more of metal in a single broadside for a distance of eighteen thousand yards! But do not forget the little guns, bristling under the big guns like needles from a cushion, which would keep off the torpedo assassins; or the light cruisers, or the colliers, or the destroyers, or the 2,300 trawlers and mine-layers, and what not, all under his direction. He had submarines, too, double the number of the German. But with all the German men-of-war in harbour, they had no targets. Where were they? One did not ask questions that could not be answered. Waiting,

as the whole British fleet was waiting, for the Germans to show their heads, while cruisers were abroad scouting the North Sea.

At the outset of the war the German fleet might have had one chance in ten of getting a turn of fortune of its favour by an unexpected stroke of strategy. This was the danger which Admiral Jellicoe had to guard against. For in one sense, the Germans had the tactical offensive by sea as well as by land; theirs the outward thrust from the centre. They could choose when to come out of their harbour; when to strike. The British had to keep watch all the time and be ready whenever the enemy should come.

Thus, the British Grand Fleet was at sea in the early part of the war, cruising here and there, begging for battle. Then it was that they learned how to avoid the submarines and the mine-fields. Submarines had played a greater part than expected, because Germany had chosen a guerrilla naval warfare: to harass, to wound, to wear down. Doubtless she hoped to reduce the number of British fighting units by attrition.

Weak England might be in plants for making arms for an army, but not in ship-building. Here was her true genius. She was a maritime power; Germany a land-power. Her part as an ally of France and Russia being to command the sea, all demands of the Admiralty for material must take precedence over demands of the War Office. At the end of the first year she had increased her fighting power by sea to a still higher ratio of preponderance over the Germans; in another year she would increase it further.

Admiral von Tirpitz wanted nothing so much as to

draw the British fleet under the guns of Heligoland or into a mine-field and submarine trap. But Sir John Jellicoe refused the bait. When he had completed his precautions and his organisation to meet all new conditions, his fleet need not go into the open. His Dreadnoughts could rest at anchor at a base while his scouts kept in touch with all that was passing and his auxiliaries and destroyers fought the submarines. Without a British Dreadnought having fired a shot at a German Dreadnought, nowhere on the face of the seas might a single vessel show the German flag except by thrusting it above the water for a few minutes.

If von Tirpitz sent his fleet out he, too, might find himself in a trap of mines and submarines. He was losing submarines and England was building more. His naval force rather than Sir John's was suffering from attrition. The blockade was complete from Iceland to the North Sea. While the world knew of the work of the armies, the care that this task required, the hardships endured, the enormous expenditure of energy, were all hidden behind that veil of secrecy which obviously must be more closely drawn over naval than over army operations.

From this flagship the campaign was directed. One would think that many offices and many clerks would be required. But the offices and the clerks were at the Admiralty. Here was the execution. In a room perhaps four feet by six was the wireless focus which received all the reports and sent all the orders, with trim bluejackets at the keys. "Go!" and "Come!" the messages were saying; they wasted no words. Officers of the staff did their work in narrow space, yet seemed to have plenty of room. Red tape is in-

flammable. There is no more place for it on board a flagship prepared for action than for unnecessary woodwork.

At every turn the compression and the concentration of power were like the guns and the decks cleared for action in their significant directness of purpose. The system was planetary in its impressive simplicity, the more striking as nothing that man has ever made is more complicated or includes more kinds of machinery than a battleship. One battleship was one unit, one chessman on the naval board.

Not all famous leaders are likeable, as every world traveller knows. They all have the magnetism of force, which is quite another thing from the magnetism of charm. What the public demands is that they shall win victories, whether personally likeable or not. But if they are likeable and simple and human in the bargain and a sailor besides — well, we know what that means.

Perhaps Sir John Jellicoe is not a great man. It is not for a civilian even to presume to judge. We have the word of those who ought to know, however, that he is. I hope that he is, because I like to think that great commanders need not necessarily appear formidable. Nelson refused to be cast for the heavy part, and so did Farragut. It may be a sailor characteristic. I predict that after this war is over, whatever honours or titles they may bestow on him, the English are going to like Sir John Jellicoe not alone for his service to the nation, but for himself.

Admiral Jellicoe is one with Captain Jellicoe, whose cheeriness even when wounded kept up the spirits of the others on the Relief Expedition of Boxer days. "He could do it, too!" one thought, having in mind

Sir David Beatty's leap to the deck of a destroyer. Spare, of medium height, ruddy, and fifty-seven. So much for the health qualification which the Admiralty lords dwelt upon as important. After he had been at sea for a year he seemed a human machine, much of the type of that destroyer as a steel machine — a thirty-knot human machine, capable of three hundred or five hundred revolutions, engines running smoothly, with no waste energy, slipping over the waves and cutting through them; a quick man, quick of movement, quick of comprehension and observation, of speech and of thought, with a delightful self-possession — for there are many kinds — which is instantly responsive with decision.

A telescope under his arm, too, as he received his guests. One liked that. He keeps watch over the fleet himself when he is on the quarter-deck. One had a feeling that nothing could happen in all his range of vision, stretching down the "avenues of Dreadnoughts" to the light-cruiser squadron, and escape his attention. It hardly seems possible that he was ever bored. Everything around him interests him. Energy he has, electric energy in this electric age, this man chosen to command the greatest war product of modern energy.

Fastened to the superstructure near the ladder to his quarters was a new broom which South Africa had sent him. He was highly pleased with that present; only the broom was von Tromp's emblem, while Blake's had been the whip. Possibly the South African Dutchmen, now fighting on England's side, knew that he already had the whip and they wanted him to have the Dutch broom, too.

He had been using both, and many other devices

in his campaign against von Tirpitz' "*unter see* boots," which was illustrated by one of the maps hung in his cabin. Quite different this from maps in a general's headquarters, with the front trenches and support and reserve trenches and gun-positions marked in vari-coloured pencillings. Instantly a submarine was sighted anywhere, Sir John had word of it, and another dot went down on the spot where it had been seen. In places the sea looked like a pepper-box cover. Dots were plentiful outside the harbour where we were; but well outside, like flies around sugar which they could not reach.

Seeing Sir John among his admirals and guests one had a glimpse of the life of a sort of mysterious, busy brotherhood. I was still searching for an admiral with white hair. If there were none among these seniors, then all must be on shore. Spirit, I think, that is the word; the spirit of youth, of corps, of service, of the sea, of a ready, buoyant definiteness — yes, spirit was the word to characterise them. Sir John moved from one to another in his quick way, asking a question, listening, giving a direction, his face smiling and expressive with a sort of infectious confidence.

"He is the man!" said an admiral. I mean, several admirals and captains said so. They seemed to like to say it. Whenever he approached one noted an eagerness, a tightening of nerves. Natural leadership expresses itself in many ways; Sir John gave it a sailor's attractiveness. But I learned that there was steel under his happy smile; and they liked him for that, too. Watch out when he is not smiling, and sometimes when he is smiling, they say.

For failure is never excused in that fleet, as more than one commander knows. It is a luxury of consid-

eration which the British nation cannot afford by sea in time of war. The scene which one witnessed in the cabin of the Dreadnought flagship could not have been unlike that of Nelson and his young captains on the *Victory,* in the animation of youth governed with only one thought under the one rule that you must make good.

Splendid as the sight of the power which Sir John directed from his quarter-deck while the ships lay still in their plotted moorings, it paled beside that when the anchor chains began to rumble and, column by column, they took on life slowly and majestically gaining speed one after another turned toward the harbour's entrance.

# XXXI

## SIMPLY HARD WORK

England's navy, the culmination of her brains and application — A perpetual war-footing — Pride of craft — The personnel behind the guns — Physique, health, conduct — Fate's favourites in the trenches! — Gun practice — A miniature German Navy — The acme of efficiency — The British nation lives or dies with its navy — The prototype of our own Atlantic fleet.

BESIDES the simple word spirit, there is the simple word work. Take the two together, mixing with them the proper quantity of intelligence, and you have something finer than Dreadnoughts; for it builds Dreadnoughts, or tunnels mountains, or wins victories.

In no organisation would it be so easy as in the navy to become slack. If the public sees a naval review it knows that its ships can steam and keep their formations; if it goes on board it knows that the ships are clean — at least, the limited part of them which it sees. And it knows that there are turrets and guns.

But how does it know that the armour of the turrets is good, or that the guns will fire accurately? Indeed, all that it sees is the shell. The rest must be taken on trust. A navy may look all right and be quite bad. The nation gives a certain amount of money to build ships which are taken in charge by officers and men who, shut off from public observation, may do about as they please.

The result rests with their industry and responsibility. If they are true to the character of the nation

by and large that is all the nation may expect; if they are better, then the nation has reason to be grateful. Englishmen take more interest in their navy than Americans in theirs. They give it the best that is in them and they expect the best from it in return. Every youngster who hopes to be an officer knows that the navy is no place for idling; every man who enlists knows that he is in for no junket on a pleasure yacht. The British navy, I judged, had a relatively large percentage of the brains and application of Britain.

"It is not so different from what it was for ten years before the war," said one of the officers. "We did all the work we could stand then; and whether cruising or lying in harbour, life is almost normal for us to-day."

The British fleet was always on a war footing. It must be. Lack of naval preparation is more dangerous than lack of land preparation. It is fatal. I know of officers who had had only a week's leave in a year in time of peace; their pay is less than our officers'. Patriotism kept them up to the mark.

And another thing: Once a sailor, always a sailor, is an old saying; but it has a new application in modern navies. They become fascinated with the very drudgery of ship's existence. They like their world, which is their house and their shop. It has the attraction of a world of priestcraft, with them alone understanding the ritual. Their drill at the guns becomes the preparation for the great sport of target practice, which beats any big game shooting when guns compete with guns, with battle practice greater sport than target practice. Bringing a ship into harbour well, holding her to her place in the formation, roaming

over the seas in a destroyer — all means eternal effort at the mastery of material with the results positively demonstrated.

On one of the Dreadnoughts I saw a gun's crew drilling with a dummy six-inch, weight one hundred pounds.

"Isn't that boy pretty young to handle that big shell?" an admiral asked a junior officer.

"He doesn't think so," the officer replied. "We haven't any one who could handle it better. It would break his heart if we changed his position."

Not one of fifty German prisoners whom I had seen filing by over in France was as sturdy as this youngster. In the ranks of an infantry company of any army he would have been above the average of physique; but among the rest of the gun's crew he did appear slight. Need more be said about the physical standard of the crews of the fighting ships of the Grand Fleet?

One had an eye to more than guns and machinery and to more than the character of the officers. He wanted to become better acquainted with the personnel of the men behind the guns. They formed patches of blue on the decks, as one looked around the fleet, against the background of the dull, painted bulwarks of steel — the human element whose skill gave the ships life — deep-chested, vigorous men in their prime, who had the air of men grounded in their work by long experience. One noted when an order was given out that it was obeyed quickly by one who knew what he had to do because he had done it thousands of times.

There are all kinds of bluejackets, as there are all kinds of other men. Before the war some took more than was good for them when on shore; some took

nothing stronger than tea; some enjoyed the sailor's privilege of growling; some had to be kept up to the mark sharply; an occasional one might get rebellious against the merciless repetition of drills.

The war imparted eagerness to all, the officers said. Infractions of discipline ceased. Days pass without any one of the crew of a Dreadnought having to be called up in default, I am told. And their health? At first thought, one would say that life in the steel caves of a Dreadnought would mean pasty complexions and flabby muscles. For a year the crews had been the prisoners of that readiness which must not lose a minute in putting to sea if von Tirpitz should ever try the desperate gamble of battle.

After a turn in the trenches the soldiers can at least stretch their legs in billets. A certain number of a ship's company now and then get a tramp on shore; not real leave, but a personally conducted outing not far from the boats which will hurry them back to their stations on signal. However, all that one needs to keep well is fresh air and exercise. The blowers carry fresh air to every part of the ship; the breezes which sweep the deck from the North Sea are fresh enough in summer and a little too fresh in winter. There is exercise in the regular drills, supplemented by setting-up exercises. The food is good and no man drinks or eats what he ought not to, as he may on shore. So there is the fact and the reason for the fact: the health of the men, as well as their conduct, had never been so good.

"Perhaps we are not quite so clean as we were before the war," said an officer. "We wash decks only twice a week instead of every day. This means that quarters are not so moist and the men have more

freedom of movement. We want them to have as much freedom as possible."

Waiting, waiting, in such confinement for thirteen months; waiting for battle! Think of the strain of it! The British temperament is well fitted to undergo such a test, and particularly well fitted are these sturdy seamen of mature years. An enemy may imagine them wearing down their efficiency on the leash. They want a fight; naturally, they want nothing quite so much. But they have the seaman's philosophy. Old von Tirpitz may come out and he may not. It is for him to do the worrying. They sit tight. The men's ardour is not imposed upon. Care is taken that they should not be worked stale; for the marksman who puts a dozen shots through the bull's-eye had better not keep on firing, lest he begin rimming it and get into bad habits.

Where an army officer has a change when he leaves the trench for his billet, there is none for the naval officer, who, unlike the army officer, is Spartan-bred to confinement. The army pays its daily toll of casualties; it lies cramped in dugouts, not knowing what minute extinction may come. The Grand Fleet has its usual comforts; it is safe from submarines in a quiet harbour. Many naval officers spoke of this contrast with deep feeling, as if fate were playing favourites, though I have never heard an army officer mention it.

The army can give each day fresh proof of its courage in face of the enemy. Courage! It takes on a new meaning with the Grand Fleet. The individual element of gallantry merges into gallantry of the whole. You have the very communism of courage. The thought is to keep a cool head and do your part

as a cog in the vast machine. Courage is as much taken for granted as the breath of life. Thus, Cradock's men, and von Spee's men, too, fought till they went down. It was according to the programme laid out for each turret and each gun in a turret.

Smith, of the army, leads a bomb-throwing party from traverse to traverse; Smith, of the navy, turns one lever at the right second. Army gunners are improving their practice day by day against the enemy; all the improving by navy gunners must be done before the battle. No sieges in trenches; no attacks and counter-attacks: a decision within a few hours — perhaps within an hour.

This partially explains the love of the navy for its work; its cheerful repetition of the drills which seem such a wearisome business to the civilian. The men know the reason of their drudgery. It is an all-convincing bull's-eye reason. Ping-ping! One heard the familiar sound of subcalibre practice, which seems as out of proportion in a fifteen-inch gun as a mouse squeak from an elephant whom you expect to trumpet. As the result appears in subcalibre practice, so it is practically bound to appear in target practice; as it appears in target practice, so it is bound to appear in battle practice.

It was on the flagship that I saw a device which Sir John referred to as the next best thing to having the Germans come out. He took as much delight in it as the gun-pointers, who were firing at German Dreadnoughts of the first line, as large as your thumb, which were in front of a sort of hooded arrangement with the guns of a British Dreadnought inside — the rest I censor myself before the regular censor sees it. When we heard a report like that of a small target

rifle inside the arrangement a small red or a small white splash rose from the metallic platter of a sea. Thus the whole German navy has been pounded to pieces again and again. It is a great game. The gun-pointers never tire of it and they think they know the reason as well as anybody why von Tirpitz keeps his Dreadnoughts at home.

But elsewhere I saw some real firing; for ships must have their regular target practice, war or no war. If those cruisers steaming across the range had been sending six- or eight-inch shrapnel, we should have preferred not to be so near that towed square of canvas. Flashes from turrets indistinguishable at a distance from the neutral-toned bodies of the vessels and the shells struck, making great splashes just beyond the target, which was where they ought to go.

A familiar scene, but with a new meaning when the time is one of war. So far as my observation is worth anything, it was very good shooting, indeed. One broadside would have put a destroyer out of business as easily as a "Jack Johnson" does for a dugout; and it would have made a cruiser of the same class as the one firing pretty groggy — this not from any experience of being on a light cruiser or any desire to be on one when it receives such a salute. But it seems to be waiting for the Germans any time that they want it.

Oh, that towed square of canvas! It is the symbol of the object of all building of guns, armour, and ships, all the nursing in dry dock, all the admiral's plans, all the parliamentary appropriations, all the striving on board ship in man's competition with man, crew with crew, gun with gun, and ship with ship. One had in mind some vast factory plant where every unit was

efficiently organised; but that comparison would not do. None will. The Grand Fleet is the Grand Fleet.

Ability gets its reward as in the competition of civil life. There is no linear promotion indulgent to mediocrity and inferiority which are satisfied to keep step and harassing to those whom nature and application meant to lead. Armchairs and retirement for those whose inclinations run that way; the captain's bridge for those who are fit to command. Officers' records are the criterion when superiors come to making promotions. But does not outside influence play a part? you ask. If professional conscience is not enough to prevent this, another thing appears to be: that the British nation lives or dies with its navy. Besides, the British public has said to all and sundry outsiders: "Hands off the navy!" All honour to the British public, much criticised and often most displeased with its servants and itself, for keeping its eye on that canvas square of cloth!

The language on board was the same as on our ships; the technical phraseology practically the same; we had inherited British traditions. But a man from Kansas and a man from Dorset live far apart. If they have a good deal in common they rarely meet to learn that they have. But seamen do meet and share a fraternity which is more than that of the sea. Close one's eyes to the difference in uniform, discount the difference in accent, and one imagined that he might be with our North Atlantic fleet.

The same sort of shop talk and banter in the wardroom, which trims and polishes human edges; the same fellowship of a world apart. Securely ready the British fleet waits. Enough drill and not too

much; occasional visits between ships; books and newspapers and a light-hearted relaxation of scattered conversation in the mess. One wardroom had a thirty-five-second record for getting past all the pitfalls in the popular "Silver Bullet" game, if I remember correctly.

# XXXII

## HUNTING THE SUBMARINE

Seaplanes afloat and on high — Diabolical bombs — Sighting a submarine — The chase — Submarine defences — Torpedo boats at home — The mine sweepers — Patience in the cold of the North Sea.

SEAPLANES cut practice circles over the fleet and then flew away on their errands, to be lost in the sky beyond the harbour entrance. With their floats, they were like ducks when they came to rest on the water, sturdy and a little clumsy looking compared to those hawks the army planes, soaring to higher altitudes.

The hawk had a broad, level field for its roost; the duck, bobbing with the waves after it came down, had its wings folded as became a bird at rest after its engines stopped and a dead thing, it was lifted on board its floating home with a crane, as cargo is swung into the hold.

On shipboard there must be shipshapeness; and that capacious, one-time popular Atlantic liner had undergone changes to prepare it for its mothering part, with platforms in place of the promenades where people had lounged during the voyage, and bombs in place of deck quoits and dining-saloons turned into workshops. Of course, one was shown the different sizes and types of bombs. Aviators exhibit them with the pride of a collector showing his porcelains. Every time they seem to me to have grown larger and more diabolical. Where will aerial progress end? Will the next war

be fought by forces that dive and fly like fish and birds?

"I'd like to drop that hundred-pounder onto a Zeppelin!" said one of the aviators. All the population of London would like to see him do it. Also Fritz, of the submarine, does not like to see the shadow of man's wings above the water.

Seaplanes and destroyers carry the imagination away from the fleet to another sphere of activity, which I had not the fortune to see. An aviator can see Fritz below a smooth surface; for he cannot travel much deeper than thirty or forty feet. He leaves a characteristic ripple and tell-tale bubbles of air and streaks of oil. When the planes have located him they can tell the hunters where to go. Sometimes it is known that a submarine is in a certain region; he is lost sight of and seen again; a squall may cover his track a second time, and the hunters, keeping touch with the planes by signals, course here and there on the lookout for another glimpse. Perhaps he escapes altogether. It is a tireless game of hide-and-seek, like that of gunnery at the front. Naval ingenuity has invented no end of methods and no end of experiments have been tried. Strictest kept of naval secrets, these. Fritz is not to be told what to avoid and what not to avoid.

Very thin the skin of a submarine; very fragile and complicated its machinery. It does not take much of a shock to put it out of order or a large cargo of explosive to dent that skin beyond repair. It being in the nature of submarines to sink, how does the hunter know when he has struck a mortal blow? If oil and bubbles come up for sometime in one place, or if they come up with a rush, that is suggestive. Then, it does

not require a nautical mind to realise that by casting about on the bottom with a grapnel you will learn if an object with the bulk and size of a submarine is there. Admirals accept no guesswork from the hunters about their exploits; they must bring the brush to prove the kill.

With Admiral Crawford I went to see the submarine defences of a harbour. It reminded one of the old days of the drawbridge to the castle, when a friend rode freely in and an enemy might try to swim the moat and scale the walls if he pleased.

"Take care! There is a tide here!" the coxswain was warned, lest the barge get into some of the troubles meant for Fritz. "A cunning fellow, Fritz. We must give him no openings."

The openings appear long enough to permit British craft, whether trawlers, or flotillas, or cruisers, or battleships, to go and come. Lying as close together as fish in a basket, I saw at one place a number of torpedo boats home from a week at sea.

"Here to-day and gone to-morrow," said an officer. "What a time they had last winter! You know how cold the North Sea is — no, you cannot, unless you have been out in a torpedo boat dancing the tango in the teeth of that bitter wind, with the spray whipping up to the tops of the smoke-stacks. In the dead of night they would come into this pitch-dark harbour. How they found their way is past me. It's a trick of those young fellows, who command."

Stationary they seemed now as the quay itself; but let a signal speak, an alarm come, and they would soon be as alive as leaping porpoises. The sport is to those who scout and hunt. But, again, do not forget those who watch, those who keep the blockade, from the

Channel to Iceland, and those trawlers who plod over plotted sea-squares with the regularity of mowing machines cutting a harvest, on their way back and forth sweeping up mines. They were fishermen before the war and are fishermen still. Night and day they keep at it. They come into the harbours stiff with cold, thaw out, and return to hardships which would make many a man prefer the trenches. Tributes to their patient courage, which came from the heart, were heard on board the battleships.

"It is when we think of them," said an officer, "that we are most eager to have the German fleet come out, so that we can do our part."

# XXXIII

## THE FLEET PUTS TO SEA

The test of perfect motion — Is the fleet bottled by submarines? — The message arrives — The sea-march of dull-toned unadorned power — Destroyers in the van — The majestic procession of battleships — The secret in sheer hard work — The sea-lion on the hunt — The "old" Dreadnought — The exotic Turk — An hour and still passing — Irresistible power — Visualizing the whole globe, safe behind that fleet — Back in London — The Zeppelin's pitiable target — Meaning of British dominion — A German comparison.

THERE is another test besides that of gun drills and target practice which reflects the efficiency of individual ships, and the larger the number of ships the more important it is. For the business of a fleet is to go to sea. At anchor it is in garrison rather than on campaign, an assembly of floating forts. Navies one has seen which seemed excellent when in harbour, but when they started to get under way the result was hardly reassuring. Some erring sister fouled her anchor chain; another had engine room trouble; another lagged for some other reason; there was fidgeting on the bridges. Then one asked, What if a summons to battle had come?

Our own officers were authority enough for me that the British had no superiors in any of the tests. But strange reports dodged in and out of the alleys of pessimism in the company of German insistence that the *Tiger* and other ships which one saw afloat had been sunk. Was the fleet really held prisoner by fear of submarines? If it could go and come freely when

it chose, the harbour was the place for it while it waited. If not, then, indeed, the submarine had revolutionised naval warfare. Admiral Jellicoe might lose some of his battleships before he could ever go into action against von Tirpitz.

"Oh, to hear the hoarse rattle of the anchor chains!" I kept thinking while I was with the fleet. "Oh, to see all those monsters on the move!"

A vain wish it seemed, but it came true. A message from the Admiralty arrived while we were on the flagship. Admiral Jellicoe called his flag secretary, spoke a word to him, which was passed in a twinkling from flagship to squadron and division and ship. He made it as simple as ordering his barge alongside, this sending of the Grand Fleet to sea.

From the bridge of a destroyer beyond the harbour entrance we saw it go. I shall not attempt to describe the spectacle, which convinced me that language is the vehicle for making small things seem great and great things seem small. If you wish words invite splendid and magnificent and overwhelming and all the reliable old friends to come forth in glad apparel from the dictionary. Personally, I was inarticulate at sight of that sea march of dull-toned, unadorned power.

First came the outriders of majesty, the destroyers; then the graceful light cruisers. How many destroyers has the British navy? I am only certain that it has not as many as it seems to have, which would mean thousands. Trying to count them is like trying to count the bees in the garden. You cannot keep your eye on the individual bees. You are bound to count some twice, so busy are their manœuvres.

"Don't you worry, great ladies!" one imagined the destroyers were saying to the battleships. "We will

clear the road. We will keep watch against snipers and assassins."

"And if any knocks are coming, we will take them for you, great ladies!" said the cruisers. "If one of us went down, the loss would not be great. Keep your big guns safe to beat other battleships into scrap."

For you may be sure that Fritz was on the watch in the open. He always is, like the highwayman hiding behind a hedge and envying people who have comfortable beds. Probably from a distance he had a peek through his periscope at the Grand Fleet before the approach of the policeman destroyers made him duck beneath the water; and probably he tried to count the number of ships and identify their classes in order to take the information home to Kiel. Besides, he always has his fingers crossed. He hopes that some day he may get a shot at something more warlike than a merchant steamer or an auxiliary; only that prospect becomes poorer as life for him grows harder. Except a miracle happened, the steaming fleet, with its cordons of destroyers, is as safe from him as from any other kind of fish.

The harbour which is the fleet's home is landlocked by low hills. There is an eclipse of the sun by the smoke from the ships getting under way; streaming, soaring columns of smoke on the move rise above the skyline from the funnels of the battleships before they appear in sight around a bend. Indefinite masses as yet they are, under their night-black plumes. Each ship seems too immense to respond to any will except its own. There is something automatic in the regularity with which, one after another, they take the bend, as if a stop watch had been held on twenty thousand tons of steel for a second's variation. As

they approach they become more distinct and, showing less smoke, there seems less effort. Their motive-power seems inherent, perpetual.

There is some sea running outside the entrance, enough to make a destroyer roll. But the battleships disdain any notice of its existence. It is no more to them than a ripple of dust to a motor truck. They plough through it.

Though you were within twenty yards of them you would feel quite safe. An express train was in no more danger of jumping the track. Mast in line with mast, they held the course with a majestic steadiness. Now the leading ship makes a turn of a few points. At the same spot, as if it were marked by the grooves of tires in a road, the others make it. Any variation of speed between them would have been instantly noticeable, as one forged ahead or lagged; but the distance between bows and sterns did not change. A line of one length would do for each interval so far as one could discern. It was difficult to think that they were not attached to some taut moving cable under water. How could such apparently unwieldy monsters, in such a slippery element as the sea, be made to obey their masters with such fine precision?

The answer again is sheer hard work! Drills as arduous in the engine room as at the guns; machinery kept in tune; traditions in manœuvring in all weathers, which are kept up with tireless practice.

Though all seemed perfection to the lay eye, let it be repeated that this was not so to the eyes of admirals. It never can be. Perfection is the thing striven for. Officers dwell on faults; all are critics. Thus you have the healthiest kind of spirit, which means that there will be no cessation in the striving.

"Look at that!" exclaimed an officer on the destroyer. "They better try another painting on her and see if they can't do better."

Ever changing that northern light. For an instant the sun's rays, strained by a patch of peculiar cloud, playing on a Dreadnought's side made her colour appear molten, exaggerating her size till she seemed as colossal to the eye as to the thought.

"But look, now!" said another officer. She was out of the patch and seemed miles farther away to the vision, a dim shape in the sea-haze.

"You can't have it right for every atmospheric mood of the North Sea, I suppose!" muttered the critic. Still, it hurt his professional pride that a battleship should show up as such a glaring target even for a moment.

The power of the fleet was more patent in movement than at rest; for the sea-lion was out of his lair on the hunt. Fluttering with flags at a review at Spithead the battleships seemed out of their element; giants trying for a fairy's part. Display is not for them. It ill becomes them, as a pink ribbon on a bulldog. Irresistibly ploughing their way they presented a picture of resolute utility — guns and turrets and speed. No spot of bright colour was visible on board. The crew was at the guns, I took it. Turn the turrets, give the range, lay the sights on the enemy's ships, and the battle was on.

"There is the old Dreadnought," said an officer.

The *old* Dreadnought — all of ten years of age, the senile old thing! What a mystery she was when she was building! The mystery accentuated her celebrity — and almost forgotten now, while the *Queen Elizabeth* and the *Warspite* and others of their class with

their fifteen-inch guns would be in the public eye as the latest type till a new type came. A parade of naval types was passing. One seemed to shade into the other in harmonious effect.

But here was an outsider, whom one noted instantly as he studied those rugged silhouettes of steel and counted guns. She had been a Turk. As the Turks were going to have only one battleship, they were not bothered about squadron homogeneity. They piled turret on turret, twelve twelve-inch guns in exotic array. She was finished and the Turks were already on board to take her home when the war began. But British law requires that any foreign man-of-war building in English shipyards may be taken over for her cost in case of war. So England kept the ship, which the Turks, I understand, thought was hardly a sporting thing to do.

One division, two divisions, four ships, eight Dreadnoughts — even a squadron coming out of a harbour numbs the faculties with a sense of its might. Sixteen — twenty — twenty-four — it was the unending numbers of this procession of sea-power which was most impressive. An hour passed and all were not by. One sat down for a few minutes behind the wind screen of the destroyer's bridge, only to look back and see more Dreadnoughts going by. One had not realised that there were so many in the harbour. He had a suspicion that Admiral Jellicoe was a conjuror who could take Dreadnoughts out of a hat.

The first was lost in the gathering darkness far out in the North Sea, and still the cloud of smoke over the anchorage was as thick as ever; still the black plumes kept appearing around the bend. The King Edward

VII class with their four twelve-inch guns and other ancients of the pre-Dreadnought era, which are still powerful antagonists, were yet to come. One's eyes ached. Those who saw a German corps march through Brussels said that it seemed irresistible. What if they had seen the whole German army? Here was the counterpart of the whole German army in sea-power and in land-power, too.

The destroyer commander looked at his watch.

"Time!" he said. "I'll put you on shore."

He must take his place in the fleet at a given moment. A word to the engine room and the next thing we knew we were off at thirty knots an hour, cutting straight across the bows of a Dreadnought steaming at twenty knots towering over us threateningly, with a bone in her teeth.

One's imagination sped across seas where he had cruised into harbours that he knew and across continents that he knew. He was trying to visualise the whole globe — all of it except the Baltic seas and a thumbmark in the centre of Europe. Hong Kong, Melbourne, Sydney, Halifax, Cape Town, Bombay — yes, and Rio and Valparaiso, Shanghai, San Francisco, New York, Boston, these and the lands back of them where countless millions dwell were all safe behind the barrier of that fleet.

Then back through the land where Shakespeare wrote to London, with its glare of recruiting posters and the throbbing of that individual freedom which is on trial in battle with the Prussian system — and as one is going to bed the sound of guns in the heart of the city! From the window one looked upward to see, under a searchlight's play, the silken sheen of a

cigar-shaped sort of aerial phantom which was dropping bombs on women and children, while never a shot was fired at those sturdy men behind armour.

When you have travelled far; when you think of Botha and his Boers fighting for England; when you have found justice and fair play and open markets under the British flag; when you compare the vociferations of von Tirpitz glorying in the torpedoing of a *Lusitania* with the quiet manner of Sir John Jellicoe, you need only a little spark of conscience to prefer the way that the British have used their sea-power to the way that the men who send out Zeppelins to war on women and children would use that power if they had it.

# XXXIV

## MANY PICTURES

The aviation grounds — Arabian Nights' heroes and their magic carpets — Corps' spirit — A chivalric custom — Billeting in French houses — Well-disciplined guests — Teaching the art of war — Picturesque tribesmen from India — Their loyalty — British justice — Matins and Angelus — Farming without men — The peasants win — Greeting the French troops — Sir John French on duty — "Inspecting and disinfecting" — The new "shilling a day" men — Albert Edward, the "willing prince" — Care of the wounded.

A SINGLE incident, an impression photographic in its swiftness, a chance remark, may be more illuminating than a day's experiences. One does not need to go to the front for them. Sometimes they come to the gateway of our château. They are pages at random out of a library of overwhelming information.

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One of the aviation grounds is not far away. Look skyward at almost any hour of the day and you will see a plane, its propeller a roar or a hum according to its altitude. Sometimes it is circling in practice; again, it is off to the front. At break of day the planes appear; in the gloaming they return to roost.

If an aviator has leave for two or three days in summer he starts in the late afternoon, flashing over that streak of Channel in half an hour and may be at home for dinner without getting any dust on his clothes or having to bother with military red tape at steamer gangways or customs houses.

The airmen are a type, with certain marked characteristics. No nervous man is wanted, and it is time

for an aviator to take a rest at the first sign of nerves. They seem shy and diffident, men of the kind given to observation rather than to talking; men accustomed to using their eyes and hands. It is difficult to realise that some quiet young fellow, who is pointed out, has had so many hairbreadth escapes. What tales, worthy of Arabian Nights' heroes who are borne away on magic carpets, they bring home, relating them as matter-of-factly as if they had broken a shoelace.

Up in their seats, a whir of the motor, and they are off on another adventure. They shy at mention of their names in print, for that is not good for the spirit of corps of this newest branch in the service of war. Anonymity is absolute. Everything is done by the corps for the corps. Possibly because it is so young, because it started with chosen men, the British Aviation Corps is unsurpasesd; but partly it is because of the British temperament, with that combination of coolness and innate love of risk which the British manner sometimes belies.

Something of the old spirit of knighthood characterises air service. It is individual work; its numbers are relatively few. I like one of the aviation customs, not for its chivalry alone, but because it makes one feel more kindly toward the Germans. If a German aviator has to descend in the British lines, whether from motor trouble or because he is winged by an anti-aircraft gun, a British aviator flies over the German lines and drops a "message-bag" with long streamers telling whether the unfortunate one is dead or alive, and the Germans do the same.

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Some mornings ago I saw several young soldiers with notebooks going about our village street. They

were from the cadet school where privates, from the trenches, take a course and return with chocolate drops on their sleeve-bands as commissioned officers. This was a course in billeting. For ours is not an army in tents, but one living in French houses and barns. The pupils were learning how to carry out this delicate task; for delicate it is. A stranger speaking another language becomes the guest of the host for whom he is fighting. Mr. Atkins receives only shelter; he supplies his own meals. His excess of marmalade one sees yellowing the cheeks of the children in the family where he is at home. Madame objects only to his efforts to cook in her kitchen; womanlike, she would rather handle the pots and pans herself.

Tommy is thoroughly instructed in his duty as guest and under a discipline that is merciless so far as conduct toward the population goes; so the two get on better than French and English military authorities feared that they might. Time has taught them to understand each other and see that difference in race does not mean absence of human qualities in common, though differently expressed. Many armies I have seen, but never one better behaved than the British army in France and Flanders in its respect for property and the rights of the population.

And while the fledgling officers are going on with their billeting, we hear the t-r-r-t of a machine gun at a machine-gun school about a mile distant, where picked men also from the trenches receive instruction in the use of an arm new to them. There are other schools within sound of the guns teaching the art of war to an expanding army in the midst of war, with the teachers bringing their experience from the battle-line,

"Their shops and their houses all have fronts of glass," wrote a Sikh soldier home, "and even the poor are rich in this bountiful land."

Sikhs and Ghurkas and Rajputs and Pathans and Gherwalis, the brown-skinned tribesmen in India, have been on a strange Odyssey, bringing picturesqueness to the khaki tone of modern war. Aeroplanes interested them less than a trotting dog in a wheel for drawing water. They would watch that for hours.

Still fresh in mind is a scene when the air seemed a moist sponge and all above the earth was dripping and all under foot a mire. I was homesick for the flash on the windows of the New York skyscrapers or the gleam on the Hudson of that bright sunlight in a drier air, that is the secret of the American's nervous energy. It seemed to me that it was enough to have to exist in Northern France at that season of the year, let alone fighting Germans.

Out of the drizzly, misty rain along a muddy road and turning past us came the Indian cavalry, which, like the British cavalry, had fought on foot in the trenches, while their horses led the leisurely life of true equine gentry. Erect in their saddles, their martial spirit defiant of the weather, their black eyes flashing as they looked toward the reviewing officers, troop after troop of these sons of the East passed by, every one seeming as fit for review as if he had cleaned his uniform and equipment in his home barracks instead of in French barns.

One asked who had trained them; who had fashioned the brown clay into resolute and loyal obedience which stood the test of a Flanders winter? What was the force which could win them to cross the seas to fight for England? Among the brown faces topped

with turbans appeared occasional white faces. These were the men; these the force.

The marvel was not that the Indians were able to fight as well as they did in that climate, but that they fought at all. What welcome summer brought from their gleaming black eyes! July or August could not be too hot for them. On a plateau one afternoon I saw them having a *gymkana*. It was a treat for the King of the Belgians, who has had few holidays, indeed, this last year, and for the French peasants who came from the neighbourhood. Yelling, wild as they were in tribal days before the British brought order and peace to India, the horsemen galloped across the open space, picking up handkerchiefs from the ground and impaling tent pegs on their lances. The French peasants clapped their hands and the British Indian officers said, "Good!" when the performer succeeded, or, "Too bad!" when he failed.

If you asked the officers for the secret of the Indian Empire they said: "We try to be fair to the natives!" which means that they are just and even-tempered. An enormous, loose-jointed machine the British Empire, which seems sometimes to creak a bit but yet holds together for that very reason. Imperial weight may have interfered with British adaptability to the kind of warfare which was the one kind that the Germans had to train for; but certainly some Englishmen must know how to rule.

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That church bell across the street from our château begins its clangour at dawn, summoning the French women and children and the old men to the fields in harvest time. But its peals carrying across the farmlands are softened by distance and sweet to the tired

workers in the evening. In the morning its peal in their ears tells them that the day is long and they have much to do before dark. After that thought I never complained because it robbed me of my sleep. I felt ashamed not to be up and doing myself, and worked with a better spirit.

"Will they do it?"

We asked this question as often in our mess in those August days as, Will the Russians lose Warsaw? Would the peasants be able to get in their crops, with all the able-bodied men away? I had inside information from the village mayor and the blacksmith and the baker that they would. A financial expert, the baker. Of course, he said that France would go on fighting till the German was beaten, just as the old men and the women and children said, whether the church bell was clanging the matins or the angelus. But there was the question of finances. It took money to fight. The Americans, he knew, had more money than they knew what to do with — as Europeans universally think, only, personally, I find that I was overlooked in the distribution — and if they would loan the Allies some of their spare billions, Germany was surely beaten.

A busy man the blacksmith, and brawny, if he had no spreading chestnut tree; busy not only shoeing farmhorses, but repairing American reapers and binders, whose owners profited exceedingly and saved the day. But not all farmers felt that they could afford the charge. These kept at their small patches with sickles. Gradually the carpets of gold waving in the breeze became bundles lying on the stubble, and great conical harvest stacks rose, while children gathered the stray stems left on the ground by the reapers till

they had immense bouquets of wheat-heads under their arms, enough to make two or three loaves of the *pain de ménage* that the baker sold. So the peasants did it; they won; and this was some compensation for the loss of Warsaw.

One morning we heard troops marching past, which was not unusual. But these were French troops in the British zone, *en route* from somewhere in France to somewhere else in France. There was not a person left in any house in that village. Everybody was out, with affection glowing in their eyes. For these were their own — their soldiers of France.

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When you see a certain big limousine flying a small British flag pass you know that it belongs to the Commander-in-Chief; and though it may be occupied only by one of his aides, often you will have a glimpse of a man with a square chin and a drooping white moustache, who is the sole one among the hundreds of thousands at the British front who wears the crossed batons of a field marshal.

It is erroneous to think that Sir John French or any other commander, though that is the case in time of action, spends all his time in the private house occupied as headquarters, designated by two wisps of flags, studying a map and sending and receiving messages, when the trench line remains stationary. He goes here and there on inspections. It is the only way that a modern leader may let his officers and men know that he is a being of flesh and blood and not a name signed to reports and orders. A machine-gun company I knew had a surprise when resting in a field waiting for orders. They suddenly recognised in a figure coming through an opening in a hedge the su-

preme head of the army in France. There was no need of a call to attention. The effect was like an electric shock, which sent every man to his place and made his backbone a steel rod. Those crossed batons represented a dizzy altitude to that battery which had just come out from England. Sir John walked up and down, looking over men and guns after their nine months' drill at home, and said, "Very good!" and was away to other inspections where he might not necessarily say, "Very good!"

Frequently his inspections are formal. A battalion or a brigade is drawn up in a field, or they march past. Then he usually makes a short speech. On one occasion the officers had arranged a platform for the speech-making. Sir John gave it a glance and that was enough. It was the end of such platforms erected for him.

"Inspections! They are second nature to us!" said a new army man. "We were inspected and inspected at home and we are inspected and inspected out here. If there is anything wrong with us it is the general's own fault if it isn't found out. When a general is not inspecting, some man from the medical corps is disinfecting."

Battalions of the new army are frequently billeted for two or three days in our village. The barn up the road I know is capable of housing twenty men and one officer; for this is chalked on the door. Before they turn in for the night the men frequently sing, and the sound of their voices is pleasant.

A typical inspection was one that I saw in the main street. The battalion was drawn up in full marching equipment on the road. Of those officers with packs on their backs one was only nineteen. This is the

limit of youth to acquire a chocolate drop on its arm. The sergeant major was an old regular, the knowing backbone of the battalion, which had taken the men of clay and taught them their letters and then how to spell and to add and subtract and divide. One of those impressive red caps arrived in a car, and the general who wore it went slowly up and down the line, front and rear, examining rifles and equipment, while the young officers and the old sergeant were hoping that Jones or Smith hadn't got some dust in his rifle-barrel at the last moment.

Brokers and carpenters, bankers and mechanics, clerks and labourers, the new army is like the army of France, composed of all classes. One evening I had a chat with two young fellows in a battalion quartered in the village, who were seated beside the road. Both came from Buckinghamshire. One was a schoolmaster and the other an architect. They were "bunkies," pals, chums.

"When did you enlist?" I asked.

"In early September, after the Marne retreat. We thought that it was our duty, then. But we've been a long time arriving."

"How do you like it?"

"We are not yet masters of the language, we find," said the schoolmaster, "though I had a pretty good book knowledge of it."

"I'm learning the gestures fast, though," said the architect.

"The French are glad to see us," said the schoolmaster. "They call us the Keetcheenaires. I fancy they thought we were a long time coming. But now we are here, I think they will find that we can hold up our end."

They had the fresh complexions which come from healthy, outdoor work. There was something engaging in their boyishness and their views. For they had a wider range of interests than that professional soldier, Mr. Atkins, these citizens who had taken up arms. They knew what trench-fighting meant by work in practice trenches at home.

"Of course it will not be quite the same; theory and practice never are," said the schoolmaster.

"We ought to be well-grounded in the principles," said the architect — imagine the average Mr. Atkins talking in such language! —" and they say that in a week or two of actual experience you will have mastered the details that could not be taught in England. Then, too, having shells burst around you will be strange at first. But I think our battalion will give a good account of itself, sir. All the Bucks men have!" There crept in the pride of regiment, of locality, which is so characteristically Anglo-Saxon.

They change life at the front, these new army men. If a carpenter, a lawyer, a sign-painter, an accountant, is wanted, you have only to speak to a new army battalion commander and one is forthcoming — a millionaire, too, for that matter, who gets his shilling a day for serving his country. Their intelligence permitted the architect and the schoolmaster to have no illusions about the character of the war they had to face. The pity was that such a fine force as the new army, which had not become trench stale, could not have a free space in which to make a great turning movement, instead of having to go against that solid battle-front from Switzerland to the North Sea.

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We have heard enough — quite enough for most of

us — about the German Crown Prince. But there is also a prince with the British army in France. No lieutenant looks younger for his years than this one in the Grenadier Guards, and he seems of the same type as the others when you see him marching with his regiment or off for a walk smoking a briar-wood pipe. There are some officers who would rather not accompany him on his walks, for he can go fast and far. He makes regular reports of his observations, and he has opportunities for learning which other subalterns lack, for he may have both the staff and the army as personal instructors. Otherwise, his life is that of any other subaltern; for there is an instrument called the British Constitution which regulates many things. A little shy, very desirous to learn, is Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, heir to the throne of Great Britain and Ireland and the Empire of India. He might be called the willing prince.

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This was one of the shells that hit — one of the hundred that hit. The time was summer; the place, the La Bassée region. Probably the fighting was all the harder here because it is so largely blind. When you cannot see what an enemy is doing you keep on pumping shells into the area which he occupies; you take no risks with him.

The visitor may see about as much of what is going on in the La Bassée region as an ant can see of the surrounding landscape when promenading in the grass. The only variation in the flatness of the land is the overworked ditches which try to drain it. Look upward and rows of poplar trees along the level and a hedge, a grove, a cottage, or trees and shrubs around it, limit your vision. Thus, if a breeze starts timidly

in a field it is stopped before it goes far. That " hot corner " is all the hotter for a burning July sun. The army water-carts which run back to wells of cool water are busy filling empty canteens, while shrapnel trims the hedges.

A stretcher was being borne into the doorway of an *estaminet* which had escaped destruction by shells, and above the door was chalked some lettering which indicated that it was a first clearing station for the wounded. Lying on other stretchers on the floor were some wounded men. Of the two nearest, one had a bandage around his head and one a bandage around his arm. They had been stunned, which was only natural when you have been as close as they had to a shell-burst — a shell that made a hit. The concussion was bound to have this effect.

A third man was the best illustration of shell destructiveness. Bullets make only holes. Shells make gouges, fractures, pulp. He, too, had a bandaged head and had been hit in several places; but the worst wound was in the leg, where an artery had been cut. He was weak, with a sort of where-am-I look in his eyes. If the fragment which had hit his leg had hit his head, or his neck, or his abdomen, he would have been killed instantly. He was an illustration of how hard it is to kill a man even with several shell-fragments, unless some of them strike in the right place. For he was going to live; the surgeon had whispered the fact in his ear, that one important fact. He had beaten the German shell, after all.

Returning by the same road by which we came a motor car ran swiftly by, the only kind of car allowed on that road. We had a glimpse of the big painted red cross on an ambulance side, and at the rear, where the

curtains were rolled up for ventilation, of four pairs of soldier boot-soles at the end of four stretchers, which had been slid into place at the *estaminet* by the sturdy, kindly, experienced medical corps men.

Only one ambulance, dust-covered, of the colour of the road itself came along, clear of any blast of shells; nothing at the front sends the same chill down the spine as the thought of a man wounded by a shell being hit a second time by a shell. It rarely happens, so prompt and so shrewd is the work of the Royal Army Medical Corps.

Before we reached the village the ambulance passed us on the way back to the *estaminet.* Very soon after the shell-burst, a telephone bell had rung down the line from the extreme front calling for an ambulance and stating the number of men hit, so that everybody would know what to prepare for. At the village, which was outside the immediate danger zone, was another clearing station. Here the stretchers were taken into a house — taken without a jolt by men who were specialists in handling stretchers — for any redressing if necessary, before another ambulance started them on a journey, with motor trucks and staff automobiles giving right of way, to a spotless white hospital ship which would take them home to England the next night.

It had been an incident of life at the front and of the organisation of war, causing less flurry than an ambulance call to an accident in a great city.

# XXXV

## BRITISH PROBLEMS

The people behind an army — Military traditions — The "regulars" at Mons — Our ideas of conscription — British pride of regiment — Our West Point system — Sandhurst and the German system — Martial team-play an instinct — The gallant British Expeditionary Force — A perfect instrument — Mr. Thomas Atkins, hero — England after the Marne — Empire-wide problems — The first year wastage — Making a new army — Kitchener the man — Characteristics of the British — The last battle that counts — The recruiting — Free institutions versus a feudal socialistic organisation — "Putting their backs into it" — The British type persists — Freedom or "verboten" on every street corner? — England's sturdiest blows yet to come.

THROUGHOUT the summer of 1915 the world was asking, What about the new British army? Why was it not attacking at the opportune moment when Germany was throwing her weight against Russia? A facile answer is easy; indeed, facile answers are always easy. Unhappily, they are rarely correct. None that was given in this instance was, to my mind. They sought to put a finger on one definite cause; again, on an individual or a set of individuals.

The reasons were manifold; as old as Waterloo, as fresh as the last speech in Parliament. They were inherent in the Anglo-Saxon race. Whoever raised a voice and said, This, or that, or you, are responsible! should first have looked into his own mind and into the history of his race and then into a mirror. Least of all should any American have been puzzled by the delay.

"Oh, we should have done better than that — we

are Americans!" I hear my countrymen say. Perhaps we should. I hope so; I believe so. The British public thought that they were going to do better; military men were surprised that they did as well.

Along with laws and language we have inherited our military ideas from England. In many qualities we are different — a distinct type; but in nothing are we more like the British than in our attitude toward the soldier and toward war. The character of any army reflects the character of its people. An army is the fist; but the muscle, the strength of the physical organism behind the blow in the long run belong to the people. What they have prepared for in peace they receive in war, which decides whether they have been living in the paradise of a fool or of a wise man.

As a boy I was brought up to believe, as an inheritance of the American Revolution, that one American could whip two Englishmen and five or six of any other nationality, which made the feathers of the eagle perched on the national escutcheon look glossy. It was a satisfying sort of faith. Americans had never tried five or six of any first-class fighting race; but that was not a thought which occurred to me. As we had won victories over the English and the English had whipped the French at Waterloo, the conclusion seemed obvious.

English boys, I understand, also had been brought up to believe that one Englishman could whip five or six men of any other nationality, but, I take it for granted, only two Americans. This clothed the British lion with majesty, while the lower ratio of superiority over Americans returned the compliment in kind from the sons of the lion to the sons of the eagle.

After I began to read history for myself and to think as I read, I found that when British and Americans had met, the generals on either side were solicitous about having superior forces, and in case of odds of two to one they made a "strategic retreat." When either side was beaten, the other always explained that he was overcome by superior numbers, though perhaps the adversary had not more than ten or fifteen per cent. advantage. Then I learned that the British had not whipped five or six times their numbers on the Continent of Europe. The British Expeditionary Force made as fine an effort to do so at Mons as was ever attempted in history, but they did not succeed.

It was a regular army that fought at Mons. The only two first-class nations which depend upon regulars to do their fighting are the British and the American. This is the vital point of similarity which is the practical manifestation of our military ideas. We have been the earth's spoiled children, thanks to the salt seas between us and other powerful military nations. Before any other power could reach the United States it must overwhelm the British navy, and then it must overwhelm ours and bring its forces in transports. Sea-power, you say. That is the facile word, so ready to the lips that we do not realise the wonder of it any more than of the sun rising and setting.

When we want soldiers our plan still is to advertise for them. The ways of our ancestors remain ours. We think that the volunteer must necessarily make the best soldier because he offers his services; while the conscript — rather a term of opprobrium to us — must be lukewarm. It hardly occurs to us that some

forms of persuasion may amount to conscription, or that the volunteer, won by oratorical appeal to his emotions or by social pressure, may suffer a reaction after enlistment which will make him lukewarm also, particularly as he sees others, also young and fit, hanging back. Nor does it occur to us that there may be virtue in that fervour of national patriotism aroused by the command that all must serve, which on the Continent in this war, has meant universal exaltation to sacrifice. The life of Jones means as much to him as the life of Smith does to him; and when the whole nation is called to arms there ought to be no favourites in life-giving.

For the last hundred years, if we except the American Civil War, ours have been comparatively little wars. The British regular army has policed an empire and sent punitive expeditions against rebellious tribes with paucity of numbers, in a work which the British so well understand. Our little regular army took care of the Red Indians as our frontier advanced from the Alleghenies to the Pacific. To put it bluntly, we have hired some one to do our fighting for us.

Without ever seriously studying the business of soldiering, the average Anglo-Saxon thought of himself as a potential soldier, taking his sense of martial superiority largely from the work of the long-service, severely drilled regular. Also, we used our fists rather than daggers or duelling swords in personal encounters and, man to man, unequipped with fire-arms or blades, the quality which is responsible for our sturdy pioneering individualism gave us confidence in our physical prowess.

Alas! modern wars are not fought with fists. A knock-kneed man who knows how to use a machine gun

and has one to use — which is also quite important — could mow down all the leading heavy-weights of the United States and England, with the latest champion leading the charge.

Now, this regular who won our little wars was not representative of the people as a whole. He was the man "down on his luck," who went to the recruiting depot. Soldiering became his profession. He was in a class, like priests and vagabonds. When you passed him in the street you thought of him as a strange being, but one of the necessities of national existence. It did not interest you to be a soldier; but as there must be soldiers, you were glad that men who would be soldiers were forthcoming.

When trouble broke, how you needed him! When the wires brought news of his gallantry you accepted the deeds of this man whom you had paid as the reflection of national courage, which thrilled you with a sense of national superiority. To him, it was in the course of duty; what he had been paid to do. He did not care about being called a hero; but it pleased the public to make him one — this professional who fights for a shilling a day in England and $17.50 a month in the United States.

Though when the campaign went well the public was ready to take the credit as a personal tribute, when the campaign went illy they sought a scapegoat, and the general, who might have been a hero, was sent to the wilderness perhaps because those busy men in Congress or Parliament thought that the army could do without that little appropriation which was needed for some other purpose. The army had failed to deliver the goods which it was paid to produce. The army was to blame, when, of course, under free in-

stitutions the public was to blame, as the public is master of the army and not the army of the public.

A first impression of the British army is always that of the regiment. Pride of regiment sometimes appears almost more deep-seated than army pride to the outsider. It has been so long a part of British martial inheritance that it is bred in the blood. In the old days of small armies and in the later days of small wars, while Europe was making every man a soldier by conscription, regiment vying with regiment won the battles of empire. The memory of the part each regiment played is the inspiration of its present; its existence is inseparable from the traditions of its long list of battle honours.

The British public loves to read of its Guards' regiment and to watch them in their brilliant uniforms at review. When a cadet comes out of Sandhurst he names the regiment which he wishes to join, instead of being ordered to a certain regiment, as in West Point. It rests with the regimental commander whether or not he is accepted. Frequently the young man of wealth or family serves in the Guards or another crack regiment for a while and resigns, usually to enjoy the semi-leisurely life which is the fortune of his inheritance.

Then there are the county line regiments, such as the Yorkshires, the Kents, and the Durhams. In this war each county wanted to read about its own regiments at the same time as about the Guards, just as Kansas at home would want to read about the Kansas regiments and Georgians about the Georgia regiments. The most trying feature of the censorship to the British public was its refusal to allow the exploitation of regiments. The staff was adamant on this point;

for the staff was thinking for the whole and of the interests of the whole. In the French and the German armies, as in our regular army, the regiment was known by a number.

The young man who lives in the big house on the hill, the son of the man of wealth and power in the community, as a rule does not go to West Point. None of the youth of our self-called aristocracy, which came up the golden road in a generation past those in modest circumstances who have generations of another sort back of them, think of going into the First Cavalry or the First Infantry for a few years as a part of their career. A few rich men's sons enter our army, but only enough to prove the rule by the exception. They do not regard the army as "the thing." It does not occur to them that they ought to do something for their country. Rather, their country ought to do something for them.

But sink the plummet a little deeper and these are not our aristocracy nor our ruling class, which is too numerous and too sound of thought and principle for them to feel at home in their company. One boy, however humble his origin, may go to West Point if he can pass the competitive examination. Europe, particularly Germany, would not approve of this; but we think it the best way. The average graduate of the Point, whether the son of a doctor, a lawyer, or a farmer, sticks to the army as his profession. We maintain West Point for the strict business purpose of teaching young men how to train our army in time of peace and to lead and direct it in time of action.

Our future officers enter West Point when they are two years younger than is the average at Sandhurst;

the course is four years compared with two at Sandhurst. I should venture to say that West Point is the harder grind; that the graduate of the Point has a more specifically academic military training than the graduate of Sandhurst. This is not saying that he may be any better in the performance of the simple duties of a company officer. It is not a new criticism that we train everybody at West Point to be a general, when many of the students may never rise above the command of a battalion. However, it is a significant fact that at the close of the Civil War every army commander was a West Point man and so were most of the corps commanders.

The doors are open in the British army for a man to rise from the ranks; not as wide as in our army, but open. The Chief of Staff of the British Expeditionary Force, Sir William Robertson, was in the ranks for ten years. No man not a West Pointer had a position equivalent in importance to his at the close of the Civil War. His rise would have been possible in no other European army.

But West Point sets the stamp on the American army and Sandhurst and Woolwich, the engineering and artillery school, on the British army. At the end of four years at West Point the men who survive the hard course may be tried by courtmartial not for conduct unbecoming an officer, but an officer and a gentleman. They are supposed, whatever their origin, to have absorbed certain qualities, if they were not inborn, which are not easily described but which we all recognise in any man. If they are absent it is not the fault of West Point; and if a man cannot acquire them there, then nature never meant them for

him. From the time he entered the school the government has paid his way; and he is cared for until he dies, if he keeps step and avoids courtmartials.

His position in life is secure. His pay counting everything is better than that of the average graduate of a university or a first-class professional school, who practises a profession. Yet only three boys, I remember, wanted to go to West Point from our congressional district in my youth. Nothing could better illustrate the fact that we are not a military people. From West Point they go out to the little army which is to fight our wars; to the posts and the Philippines, and become a world in themselves; an isolated caste in spite of themselves. I am not at all certain that either the British or the American officer works as hard as the German in time of peace. Neither has the practical incentive nor the determined driver behind him.

For it takes a soldier Secretary of War to drive a soldier; for example, Lord Kitchener. Those British officers, who applied themselves in peace to the mastery of their profession and were not content with the day's routine requirements, had to play chess without chessmen; practise manœuvres on a board rather than with brigades, divisions, corps, and armies. They became the rallying points in the concourse of untrained recruits.

German and French officers had the incentive and the chessmen. The Great War could not take them by surprise. They took the road with a machine whose parts had been long assembled. They had been trained for big war; their ambition and intelligence were under the whip of a definite anticipation.

A factor overlooked, but even more significant than

training or staff work, was that what might be called martial team-play had become an instinct with the continental peoples through the necessity of their situation. This the Japanese also possess. It is the right material ready to hand for the builder. Not that it is the kind of material one admires; but it is the right material for making a war-machine. One had only to read the expert military criticism in the British and the American press at the outset of the war to realise how vague was the truth of the continental situation to the average Englishman or American — but not to the trained British staff.

So that little British Expeditionary Force, in ratio of number one to twenty or thirty of the French army, crossed the Channel to help save Belgium. Gallantry it had worthy of the brightest chapter in the immortal history of its regiments from Quebec to Kandahar, from Waterloo to South Africa, Guards and Hussars, Highlanders and Lowlanders, kilts and breecks, Connaught Rangers and Royal Fusiliers, Duke of Wellingtons and Prince of Wales' Own, come again to Flanders. The best blood of England was leading Tommy Atkins. Whatever British aristocracy is or is not, it never forgets its duty to the England of its fathers. It is never ingrate to its fortune. The time had come to go out and die for England, if need be, and these officers went as their ancestors had gone before them, as they would go to lectures at Oxford, to the cricket field and the polo field, in outward phlegm, but with a mighty passion in their hearts.

The Germans affected to despise this little army. It had not been trained in the mass tactics which hurl columns of flesh forward to gain tactical points that have been mauled by artillery fire. You do not use

mass tactics against Boers, nor against Afridis or Filipinos. It is difficult to combine the two kinds of efficiency. Those who were on the march to the relief of the Peking legations recall how the Germans were as ill at ease in that kind of work as the American and British were at home. It made us misjudge the Germans and the Germans misjudge us when they thought of us as trying to make war on the Continent of Europe. A small, mobile, regular army, formed to go over seas and march long distances, was to fight in a war where millions were engaged and a day's march would cover an immense stretch of territory in international calculations of gain and loss.

For its own purposes, the British Expeditionary Force was well-nigh a perfect instrument. As quantity of ammunition was an important factor in transport in the kind of campaign which it was prepared for, its guns were the most accurate on a given point and its system of fire adapted to that end; but the French system of fire, with plentiful ammunition from near bases over fine roads, was better adapted for a continental campaign.

To the last button that little army was prepared. Man for man and regiment for regiment, I should say it was the best force that ever fired a shot in Europe; this without regard to national character. As England must make every regular soldier count and as she depended upon the efficiency of the few rather than on numbers, she had trained her men in musketry. No continental army could afford to allow its soldiers to expend the amount of ammunition on the target range that the British had expended. Only by practise can you learn how to shoot. This gives the soldier confidence. He stays in his trench and keeps

on shooting because he knows that he can hit those advancing figures and that this is his best protection. The more I learn, the more I am convinced that the Germans ought to have got the British Expeditionary Force; and the Germans were very surprised that they did not get it. With their surprise developed a respect for British arms, reported by all visitors to Germany.

Mr. Thomas Atkins, none other, is the hero of that retreat from Mons. The first statue raised in London after the war ought to be of him. If there had been five hundred thousand of him in Belgium at the end of the second week in August, Brussels would now be under the Belgian flag. Like many other good things in this world, including the French army, there were not enough of him. Many a company on that retreat simply got tired of retreating, though orders were to fall back. It dug a trench and lay down and kept on firing — accurately, in the regular, business-like way, reinforced by the "stick it" British character — until killed or engulfed. This held back the flood long enough for the remainder of the army to retire.

Not all the generalship emanated from generals. I like best that story of the cross-roads where, with Germans pressing hard on all sides, two columns in retreat fell in together, uncertain which way to go. With confusion developing for want of instructions, a lone exhausted staff officer who happened along took charge and standing at the junction in the midst of shell-fire told every doubting unit what to do, with one-two-three alacrity of decision. His work finished, he and his red cap disappeared, and I never could find any one who knew who he was.

After the retreat and after the victory of the Marne, what was England's position? The average Englishman had thought that England's part in the alliance was to send a small army to France and to take care of the German fleet. England's fleet was her first consideration; that must be served; France's demand for rifles and supplies must be attended to before the British demand; Serbia needed supplies; Russia needed supplies; a rebellion threatened in South Africa; the Turks threatened the invasion of Egypt. England had to spread her energy out over a vast empire with an army that had barely escaped annihilation. Every soldier who fought must be supplied over seas. German officers put a man on a railroad train and he detrained near the front. Every British soldier had to go aboard a train and then a ship and then disembark from the ship and go aboard another train. Every article of ordnance, engineering, medical supply, food supply, must be handled four times, while in Germany they need be handled but twice. Any railway traffic manager will understand what this means. Both the British supply system and the medical corps were marvels.

Germany was stronger than the British public thought. Germany and Austria could put at the front in the first six months of the war practically double the number which the Allies could maintain. Russia had multitudes to draw from in reserve, but the need was multitudes at the front. There she was only as strong as the number she could feed and equip. In the first year of the war England suffered 380,000 casualties on land, six times the number of bayonets that she had at Mons. All this wastage must be met before she could begin to increase her forces. The

length of line on the Western front that she was holding was not the criterion of her effort. The French who shared with the British that terrible Ypres salient realised this.

Aside from the regulars she had the Territorials, who are much the same as our National Guard and varied in equality in the same way. Native Indian troops were brought to France to face the diabolical shell-fire of modern guns, and Territorials went out to India to take the place of the British regulars, who were withdrawn for France. Every rifle that England could bring to the assistance of the French in their heroic stand was a rifle to the good.

Meanwhile, she was making her new army. For the first time since Cromwell's day, all classes in England were going to war. Making an army out of the raw is like building a factory to be manned by expert labour which you have to train. Let us even suppose that the factory is ready and that the proprietor must mobilise his managers, overseers, foremen, and labour from far and near — a force individually competent, but which had never before worked together. It would require some time to organise team-play, wouldn't it? Particularly it would if you were short of managers, overseers, and foremen. To express my meaning from another angle, in talking once with an English pottery manufacturer he said:

"We do not train our labour in the pottery district. We breed it from generation to generation."

In Germany they have not only been training soldiers, but breeding them from generation to generation. You may think that system is wrong. It may be against your ideals. But in fighting against that system for your ideals when war is violence and kill-

ing, you must have weapons as effective as the enemy's. You express only a part of Germany's preparedness by saying that the men who left the plough and the shop, the factory and the office, became trained soldiers at the command of the staff as soon as they were in uniform and had rifles. These men had the instinct of military co-ordination bred in them and so had their officers, while England had to take men from the plough and the shop, the factory and the office, and equip them and teach them the rudiments of soldiering before she could consider making them into an army.

It was one thing for the spirit of British manhood to rise to the emergency. Another and even more important requisite went with it. If my country ever faces such a crisis I hope that we also may have the courage of wisdom which leaves an expert's work to an expert. England had Lord Kitchener, who could hold the imagination and the confidence of the nation through the long months of preparation, when there was little to show except repetition of drills here and there on gloomy winter days. It required a man with a big conception and patience and authority to carry it through, and recruits with an unflinching sense of duty. The immensity of the task of transforming a non-military people into a great fighting force grew on one in all its humdrum and vital details as he watched the new army forming.

"Are you learning to think in big numbers?" was Lord Kitchener's question to his generals.

Half of the regular officers were killed or wounded. Where the leaders? Where the drillmasters for the new army? Old officers came out of retirement, where they had become used to an easy life as a rule,

to twelve hours a day of hard application. "Dug-outs" they were called. Veteran non-commissioned officers had to drill new ones. It was demonstrated that a good infantry soldier can be made in six months; perhaps in three. But it takes seven months to build a rifle-plant; many more months to make guns — and the navy must never be stinted. Probably the English are slow; slow and thoroughgoing. They are good at the finish, but not quick at the start. They are used to winning the last battle, which they say is the one that counts. The complacency of empire with a century's power was a handicap, no doubt. We are inclined to lean forward on our oars, they to lean back — which does not mean that they cannot lean forward in an emergency or that they lack reserve strength.

Public impatience was inevitable. It could not be kept silent; that is the English of it — the American, too. We demand to know what is being done. It was not silent in the Civil War. From the time that McClellan started forming his new army until the Peninsula was six months, if I remember rightly. Von Moltke, who built the German staff system, said that the Civil War was a strife between two armed mobs; though I think if he had brought his Prussians to Virginia a year later, in '63, which would have ended the Civil War there and then, he would have had an interesting time before he returned to Berlin.

The British new army was not to face another new army, but the most thoroughly organised military machine that the world has ever known. Not only this, but the Germans, with a good start and their system established, were not standing still and waiting for the British to catch up, so that the two could begin again

even, but were adapting themselves to the new features of the war. They had been the world's arms-makers. With vast munition plants ready, their feudal socialistic organisation could make the most of their resources in men and material.

More than two million Englishmen went to the recruiting depots, though no invader had set foot on their soil, and offered to serve in France or wherever they were needed over seas. If no magic could put rifles in their hands or summon batteries of guns to follow them on the march, the fact of their volunteering, when they knew by watching from day to day the drudgery that it meant and what trench warfare was, shows at least that the race is not yet decadent. Perhaps we should have done better. No one can know until we try it. If liberal treatment by the government and the course set by Secretary Root means anything, our staff ought to be better equipped for such a task than the English were; this, too, only war can decide.

Whatsoever of pessimism appeared in the British press was telegraphed to America. Pessimism was not permitted in the German press. Imagine Germany holding control of the cable and allowing press despatches from Germany to pass over it with the freedom that England allowed! Imagine Germany having waited as long as England before making cotton contraband! The British press demanded information from the government which the German press would never have dared to ask. I have known an American correspondent, fed out of hand in Germany and thankful for anything that the fearful German war machine might vouchsafe, turning a belligerent when he was in London for privileges which

he would never have thought of demanding in Berlin.

If an English ship were reported sunk, he believed it must be, despite the government's denial. Did he go to the Germans and demand that he might publish the rumours of what had happened to the *Moltke* in the Gulf of Riga, or how many submarines Germany had really lost? Indeed, he was unconsciously paying a compliment to British free institutions. He expected more in England; it seemed a right to him, as it would at home. Englishmen talked frankly to him about mistakes; he heard all the gossip; and sometimes he concluded that England was in a bad way. In Germany such talk was not allowed. Every German said that the government was absolutely truthful; every German believed all of its reports. But ask this critical American how he would like to live under German rule, and then you found how anti-German he was at heart. Nothing succeeds like success, and Germany was winning and telling no one if she had any setbacks.

If there were a strike, the British press made the most of it for it was big news. Pessimism is the Englishman's natural way of arousing himself to fresh energy. It is also against habit to be demonstrative in his effort; so it is not easy to understand how much he is doing. Then, pessimism brought recruits; it made the Englishman say, "I've got to put my back into it!" Muddling there was and mistakes, such as that of the method of attack at Gallipoli; but in the midst of all this disspiriting pessimism, no Englishman thought of anything but of putting his back into it more and more. Lord Kitchener had said that it was to be a long war and evidently it must be. Of

course, England's misfortune was in having the war catch her in the transition from an old order of things to social reforms.

But if the war shows anything it is that basically English character has not changed. She still has unconquerable, dogged persistence, and her defects for this kind of war are not among the least admirable of her traits to those who desire to live their own lives in their own way, as the English-speaking people have done for five hundred years, without having a *verboten* sign on every street corner.

It is still the law that when a company of infantry marches through London it must be escorted by a policeman. This means a good deal: that civil power is superior to military power. It is a symbol of what Englishmen have fought for with spades and pitchforks and what we have fought Englishmen for. My own idea is that England is fighting for it in this struggle; and starting unready against a foe which was ready, as the free peoples always have, she was fighting for time and experience before she could strike her sturdiest blows.

THE END

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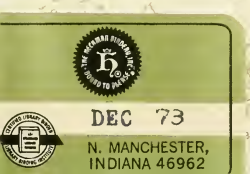
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